■ Entertainment ■ Lifestyle ■ Sports ■ Infotech

Robin Williams talks about his Filipino wife, balut and lechon

Pinoy masterpieces come home from Singapore

Que captures Carlsberg Masters in Vietnam, pockets P1.97M

Guild Wars begin

Tanong ng Bayan / A18

Results ng US elections, grupo o dinagrupa?

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, November 8, 2004 / 48 pages / Vol. 19 / no. 334

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English-only program even for school janitors

By Tarra V. Quismundo

Pilot e-English classes

The Manila city government-owned Tondo school has introduced that it assisted English-level the method of

California boom town's next mayor a Fil-Am

By Norman Bordadora

A UNIVERSITY of the Philippines economics graduate is set to make his mark in US politics.

Frank Ramos, a Filipino-American business executive, is in line to take over as mayor of northern California's boom town of Hercules.

Pinoy still hostage in Iraq

Arab TV retracts report of release

HOPES FELL yesterday for Filipino accountant Robert Tarongoy, held hostage in Iraq, but rose for engineer and diplomat Angelito Nayan, held captive in Afghanistan.

The Arab Al-Jazeera television network retracted its earlier report that Tarongoy had been freed and said that his case was under review. The Qatar-based news channel had said on Friday that Tarongoy had been released after he only appealed for his freedom.

Tarongoy's whereabouts "remain unknown following reports that he was released along with a Nepalese hostage. It later turned out that only the Nepalese captive was released," Al-Jazeera said yesterday.

Hopes had raised the release of its second wife, Ma. Theresa, was among a group reunited by masked gunmen who stormed their Baghdad offices on Nov. 1. The group included an American and three Iraqis, two of whom were later released.

In Kabul, Afghanistan, militants threatening to kill Nayan and two other United Nations election workers and Afghan and UN officials met with government in southern Afghanistan yesterday and asserted they were willing to drop some of their conditions.

Authorities have not confirmed any contact with Jawhar Mudzhaeva, a Taliban spokes-

WHAT'S SO FUNNY? An oldman escapes across the camera's view of attackers, a scene of Charlie Chaplin and fellow comedians fade to fill the spirit of three bystanders in front of a broken-windshield-framed in Pasay City amid these trying times.

Gov't needs to impose hike in 'sin' taxes, says senator

THE GOVERNMENT has no choice but to collect more money from killer taxes, such as smoking, says the chair of the Senate ways and means committee, in an honest government, economic managers urged President Macapagal-Arroyo and leaders of Congress to take more drastic measures to address the "desperate fiscal crisis."

Sen. Ferdie Pimentel, author—Vicente S. Perez, Jose Ma Concepcion—and former Central Bank Governor Jose Cuisia made the appeal less than a week after Mr. Arroyo declared that the government had exhausted itself from the fiscal crisis.

The President, who said the country was in the middle of a fiscal crisis in August, did not explain why she believed that the fiscal crisis was over when Congress has yet to pass one of her eight top measures.

The bill imposing excise taxes on tobacco and alcohol products is the only measure expected to be approved by Congress before the year ends.

The ways and means committee of Sen. Ralph Recto is holding hearings on the House-approved bill that seeks to raise taxes on cigarettes and alcohol by 20 percent in 2005. The measure is expected to be sponsored on the Senate floor by Pimentel.

"You a leader (O)ppressed, undisputing, no qualms about it," Sanco said in a statement. "But from a fiscal point of view, smoking becomes a victim because it brings needed revenues to the government."

Last year, Recto said, cigarette smokers "coughed up" P135.7 billion in excise taxes on tobacco and an additional P4.5 billion in value-added taxes.

Less than one-fifth of corporate taxes, about P1 of every P5 in taxes collected in the country came from tobacco, according to the Administration studies.

For another way, each of the

Iraq declares 60-day state of emergency

US MARINES wage urban warfare near reminiscent of the Clarkes Havana movie "Blue Star"... complete with outlawed Iraqi horses...in their base outside Fallujah, Iraq.

BAGHDAD—The Iraqi government Sunday declared a state of emergency for 60 days throughout the country except for Kurdish-run areas in the north as US and Iraqi forces prepared for an expected all-out assault on rebel-held Fallujah.

Ibrahim Jaafari announced the decision in a statement read on television by Interior Minister Falah al-Naqib.

"It is going to be a curfew. It is going to be in many things, but it cannot be the prime minister will restrict it," he said.

He declared in any schedule the announcement signaled an imminent attack on the insurgent stronghold Fallujah, saying "Military action against insurgents in Fallujah is necessary."

The statement came as more

Bush win disappoints Europeans

By Amanda Darnalle

EUROPEANS, like much of the rest of the world, woke up to the reelection of US President George W. Bush with mixed emotions.

Now they will come to terms with another four years of Bush in the big question stands what countries not only those who wanted him to lose.

ANALYSIS Countries, including the Philippines, will also have to deal with a second Bush administration which has been reinforced by an electoral mandate that gave him a decisive vote of confidence to continue with his aggressive war policy on terror and the US occupation of Iraq.

The Bush who appeared in his first victory press conference did not necessarily the thought that he would be less hardnosed than he was and less arrogant and would work out for a wider consensus on US foreign policy to counteract opposed America's almost unilateral march to war.

Many EU allies, who had openly hoped for Bush's defeat, are now struggling to come to terms with the reality that the US president had increased his support with 51 percent of American re-electing him.

Slower population growth linked to income rise

By Ellen S. Rivera

THE PHILIPPINES could have saved at least P16 billion a year on health and education spending more for 10 years had it reduced its population growth rate to Thailand's level, according to a study by the Asia Pacific Policy Center.

Based on purchasing power parity, the average income of each Filipino would have also increased by 22 percent, said the APPC study, which used cross-country data from 1975 to 2000.

The increased income would have ventured the poverty incidence in the Philippines by 9.3 percent, or 5.6 million Filipinos, according to the study titled "Population-Income-Poverty Nexus: A Quantitative Assessment."

The Philippine population grows at an average of 2.36 per cent a year, equivalent to 1.7 million babies, while Thailand has a growth rate of only 1.04 percent. In the 1970s, both countries had population growth rates of around 3.0 percent.

The study showed that the high population growth rate of the Philippines was the biggest factor in the country's slow economic development for the past three decades.

Conception, which encompasses views of advocates broad as the cause of economic slowdown, was the next biggest hindrance to growth.

"They always say it's corruption, but population growth is a more important factor in explaining the slow economic growth of the Philippines," economist Arsenio Balisacan, a poverty expert in the Philippines who led the APPC research, told the Business yesterday.

"The fiscal deficit is very small compared to the savings we could have had from limiting the population growth," he said.

The P16 billion in yearly savings is almost twice the P9.2 billion appropriated for the Department of Health last year and is close to the

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2004

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Cops kill top kidnap gang leader in Samar

By Vincent S. Lalora, PhD Inquirer Bureau
and Clarissa V. Esguerra, Inquirer Mindanao

TACLOBAN CITY—One of the country's most wanted kidnappers was killed in a shootout with arresting policemen early Tuesday morning in a remote mountain village in Catubig, Samar, some 120 kilometers north of this city.

Killed was Abu Rulindungan, a native of Barangay Bantayan, Catubig, who was the alleged mastermind behind at least 12 kidnappings in Metro Manila and other countries, a P600,000 price on his head.

Chief Supt. Dionisio G. Cobarde Jr., director of Police Regional Office-Eastern Visayas (PRO-8), said a police team and Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) agents from Manila went to Rulindungan's house in Bantayan at about 5:30 a.m. yesterday to serve an arrest warrant.

"He was told to surrender peacefully but he opted to shoot it out with police authorities," Cobarde told the Inquirer.

Recovered from the suspect were a 9-mm Ingram machine pistol and a .45-cal. pistol. Wounded during the fatal shootout was PO3 Dandy Bonita, a member of the composite team from Catubig.

Cobarde said the suspect arrived in the village on Saturday and was spotted by concerned residents who informed local police.

Cobarde said they immediately reported Rulindungan's whereabouts to the CIDG in Manila.

Rulindungan had seven criminal cases against him, the last of which was filed in Manila but pertained to his supposed role in the Cebu kidnappings.

Cobarde said the body of the suspect was brought to the Eastern Samar provincial capital of Borongan for autopsy.

Senior Superintendent Alberto Tan, chief of the Eastern Samar provincial police office, said the operation was coordinated with the CIDG in Manila.

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Rulindungan was wanted for the abduction of Alberto Tan, said to be a car dealer, and Rulindungan was the leader of a kidnap-for-ransom syndicate that staged at least 12 abduction in Metro Manila since last year. The group's latest victims were Rosalita Magallon in Antipolo City and Tan in Mandaluyong, Quezon City.

Last April, four members of Rulindungan's group were killed and another was arrested during an encounter with agents of the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force in Batangas.

With Rulindungan's killing, at least 15 other top kidnap gang leaders are still at large. Six of them carry P600,000 bounties on their heads.

RP courting more US displeasure with China visit

By Christian V. Esguerra

AMID strained diplomatic relations with the United States, the government is said to be taking another bold step that might further disconcert Washington.

Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. yesterday flew to China for a dialogue with his Chinese counterpart, Gen. Cao Gangchuan, even as moves to enhance bilateral security between Manila and Beijing.

But of his itineraries is a course that will cut Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in Beijing.

The Chinese government has invited Cruz to an offshoot of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Santiago, Chile, next month, where President Arroyo is expected to meet Wen.

Cruz's trip to China comes at a time when the United States, the country's biggest trading partner, is reportedly irked by the Philippines' growing ties with Beijing.

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House bill seeks to lower amount for plunder

A CONGRESSMAN yesterday sought to lower from the present P50 million to P25 million the amount involved for a corrupt government official to be charged with plunder.

In a bill filed in the House, Rep. Prospero Pichay (Lakas, Surigao del Sur) noted that the present law on plunder was not harsh enough to control corrupt military, police and other government officials.

Pichay said the law had not curtailed corruption in government since Cha Sue Jose Ventosa to have reviewed."

"The inadequacy of existing measures to contain graft and corruption in government between members of Congress to strengthen legislation against such acts," he said.

Plunder is classified as a heinous crime and is punishable by death when found guilty.

By reducing the amount to P25 million, those officials would think twice before entering into shady deals or transactions while in the government service," Pichay said.

He said the present law was framed in a deterrent to those with an inclination to succumb to the corrupting influences of power and a safeguard against the possible recurrence of the depredations of a morally bankrupt regime. —Cynthia D. Baldoza

House to pass budget next month, JDV vows

By Cynthia D. Baldoza

STRIKES Juan de Unsecia yesterday vowed to have the proposed 2005 national budget approved by the House of Representatives early next month so the measure could be transmitted to the Senate before Congress breaks for the Christmas holidays.

Briefing reporters on the issue in an impromptu press conference, he said he would meet with all the floor leaders of the House to work double time on the budget measure in the plenary hall to prevent another instance where the 2004 budget.

"We have amply demonstrated on the approval of said measure in the past, we are prepared to work double or triple time if need be to ensure its speedy passage," he said.

Congressmen will return to work today with the committee on appropriations tasked to wrap up marathon hearings on the budget measure.

De Venecia said the panel could wrap up committee hearings on the measure before the end of the week.

Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr. (LP, Camarines Sur) said he (also had worked day and night to prepare for the approval of the budget measure.

House Minority Leader Roilo Golez (LDP, Cavite), however, said that opposition congressmen would scrutinize the measure once it reached the floor.

De Venecia earlier said he expected at least two weeks of plenary debates on the budget measure in the House before its approval on the third and final reading by the first week of December.

"We are committed to this timetable, to the approval of the measure in early December, so that the House could transmit it to the Senate for consideration by the senators before the Christmas break," De Venecia said.

The Senate could then schedule committee hearings and approve the measure in January, he said.

Andaya said approval of the budget was the "highest priority of the Senate."

In arrest, he said, a separated budget would be adopted for 45 days since the Senate is expected to pass the Pesos-approved measure only in a month's time.

Estrada threatens to fire lawyers anew

By Norman Bordadora

FORMER President Joseph Estrada yesterday threatened to sack his lawyers from further defending him in his plunder trial in the Sandiganbayan, to protest the government's alleged harassment of his relatives.

"I'm not sure if they will still appear in court," Interior Magazine quoted Rep. Imelda Marcos, her wife's spokesperson, said.

Ulbrandt has no choice but to discharge the services of his lawyers because of their repeated absences at the prosecution witnesses," Ulbrandt told the Inquirer in a telephone interview.

In February 2002, Estrada dismissed his defense team to protest the Sandiganbayan's "bias" against him.

The lawyers tried to reach Estrada's lawyer Raymund Fortun but his mobile phone was beyond reach as of press time.

"I haven't seen for my parents when my relatives are being harassed, bullied, intimidated and even murdered," Estrada said in a statement released yesterday by Ulbrandt.

Estrada accused government prosecutors and the National Bureau of Investigation of resorting to intimidation tactics to witness Mel Sarmiento, a former Senate aide who was arrested at his post after he testified in defense of the former President.

"I cannot just let them ignore my basic human and constitutional rights by being unduly accepting in the line of blatant obstruction of justice," Estrada said. Sarmiento had testified in favor of Estrada in the alleged misdirection of more than P130 million in jueteben receipts from those that province in the late 1990s.

Senator who gave the defense panel copies of the NBI's investigation report that showed no link between Estrada and the alleged misdirection as claimed by whistle-blower Senior Supt. Gen. "Chavit" Singson.

After his testimony, Sarmiento was relieved of his post as OIC regional director for Western Mindanao by NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco.

₱2B in advances unliquidated–COA

By Cynthia D. Balana

ALMOST P2 billion in cash advances granted by top government officials last year remained unliquidated as of June this year, the Commission on Audit said in a report submitted to the House committee on appropriations.

The COA report said that on top of this, nearly P1 billion in cash advances granted that year had yet to be liquidated.

What was more alarming, committee chair Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr. (LP, Camarines Sur) said, was the disclosure by the state audit body that a total of 267 notices of disallowance amounting to P1.33 billion in the first six months of the year.

In its report, COA said that field units monitored the liquidation of P2.71 billion, or 36 percent, of the P4.67 billion in cash advances issued last year. A total of P4.11 billion was liquidated, or 88 percent, of the P5.06 billion in cash advances granted this year.

"Cash advances not or are not liquidated because these can still be liquidated. There is yet no ruling as to the validity of the expenses made, only a delay in rendering a report on how the money was spent," Andaya explained.

Andaya said that a notice of disallowance was in the realm of unauthorized spending of public money and this must be refunded to the agency from which it was drawn.

An unliquidated cash advance implies a delay while a disallowance is final, Andaya said.

The COA submitted its private pinkbarrel report as part of its report for a P146-billion budget in 2006.

The report, however, did not name the agencies that had piled up unliquidated and disallowed cash advances or similar infractions committed years before 2005.

During the budget hearing last week, Andaya asked COA officials for a list of the government officials and agencies concerned so that collection notices could be issued.

"The recovery of the amounts involved would help the government plug the deficit and avoid the signal that subsidies in the custody of public funds will not go unpunished," he said.

From January to June this year, the COA said it submitted 5,259 audit reports and conducted 8,449 cash examinations.

It said it also reviewed 27,393 contracts and purchase orders in addition to inspecting 54,200 projects and deliveries.

As a result of its audit findings, COA filed eight informations cases in the Office of the Ombudsman against certain government officials during the six-month period.

GMA won't meet press

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has postponed her "first media" with local and international journalists in Malacañang tonight, apparently to avoid being asked about the status of the Lapu-Lapu hostage crisis.

Malacañang announced in advance yesterday announcing that the scheduled "President's Hour" had been moved to another date to be announced later.

In a text message yesterday, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunyi declared the postponement was due to the uncertainty over the fate of Filipino hostage Nelson Tan Guang, who was erroneously reported to have been freed by his captors on Friday.

"The next day was Sari Makalutang announced the President's Monday meeting with journalists.

The Palace hopeful a news blackout on the hostage crisis last week after starting to leave from the fiasco of the first hostage incident involving Angelo de la Cruz.

Bunyi said the President agreed to meet the morning of Wednesday. Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

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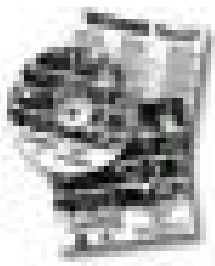

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Bush win disappoints Europeans

First paragraph A1

The disappointment is much of Europe were dar 'til afternoon (such is reflected by the editorial of the Independent newspaper in London, which said Bush's victory came as a "bitter disappointment to those many Americans who had worked so hard for change and to the billions abroad who had desperately hoped to see a more progressive president in the White House."

The Independent added: "Six of her four years of a president in should listen. In right and the neo-conservatives a modest four years in which the United States risks sliding back into an earlier age of bigotry and social injustice."

The editorial said it was a sad commentary on the US electorate that "Bush was not called to account for his gross errors in office. It is not only America, but the rest of the world, that must now live with the consequences."

Bush's staunchest ally in Europe, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who was reported to have secretly wished for the defeat of Bush, summed up the dilemma of the Europeans, most of whom opposed the war on Iraq.

"It is wrong when people are in a state of denial," Blair said. "The election has happened. America has spoken. The rest of the world should listen."

Even so, the British prime minister added, "It is important that America listens to the rest of the world."

Will he listen?

But the question that worries many is: Will a Bush relishing his reelection seek to temper his policies, or listen to the rest of the world?

Bush's victory paves a subdued but offered mild comfort to that possibility. His charismatic, rather than rousing vote-clinching speech was in its tone is reassuring.

Leaving out his pledge for the next four years, Bush said: "I earned capital in the campaign, political capital, and now I intend to spend it. It's my style."

He added: "We've had an agenda: social security and tax reform, moving this economy forward, education, fighting and winning the war on terror."

Although Bush has a pointed unquestionable nightmare to overcoming animosity of the popular way, the election result revealed to America deeply divided down the middle.

Bush received 59.3 million votes to, John Kerry's 55.7 million (51 percent to 48 percent). But in the Electoral College, Bush won the popular vote in Ohio. In this battleground state, Bush also had 140,000 votes more than Kerry.

Facing both a divided America and a divided world opinion about his leadership, Bush resolved not to "every person who voted for my opponent" and said, "I will need your support and I will work to earn it."

More aggressively

Quoting a religious homily, Bush said: "Jesus said, let trials equal to your powers, pray for pastors equal to your tasks." The who interpreted as a signal that Bush will use his strengthened powers more aggressively to push both his domestic and foreign policy agendas, rather than a more restrained use of America's military power.

Bush believes that his policies have been approved by the American people. But John Ikenberry, political science at the University of Wisconsin, said: "The big question is the extent to which the president will reach out and try to win over Democrats or if he will push an agenda that's more to the right."

Another academic, Prof. Bruce Russett of the State University of New York, said: "I don't see much pull back." Russett added that pressures from the Republican conservatives simultaneously attack Bush has to pay back, pointed to a "very aggressive second term."

There were no signs that Bush will abandon his prerogative was his choice, even if he admitted that he had offended some allies on Iraq.

Bush also offered to rebuild relations with countries that disagreed with him over Iraq, saying: "I'll continue to reach out to our friends and allies. Whatever our past disagreements, we share a common enemy and common goals. And together we can prevail."

But Bush was not apologetic over his policies.

More cooperation

French President Jacques Chirac and Russian Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, two of the Western European leaders who formed the hard core of opposition to the Iraq invasion, congratulated Bush. But they emphasized the need to increase transatlantic cooperation.

Blaire said the challenges facing the world could not be tackled "without a closer trans-Atlantic partnership." Taking a conciliatory tone, Chirac wrote to Bush, hoping his second term "will be the occasion for demonstrating the French-American friendship."

The question is will Bush incorporate these sentiments in his conclusions. The other question is how will the only superpower in the world that has been notoriously high-handed in its diplomacy in the past four years, resort to the rest of the world after more administration circles have been come to believe that the American people have given an overwhelming vote of confidence to policies vehemently opposed by America's Asian-Atlantic allies—notably Germany and France which high administration officials have derided as the "old Europe."

Iran issue

After the elections, the opinion in "old Europe" against America's unilateral and preemptive doctrine continues to run high.

Bush's reelection has given

California boom town's next mayor a Fil-Am

First paragraph A2

City on the second Tuesday of December.

"Riverside City is one of the fastest growing cities in California and one of the most diverse and ethnic cities in the [illegible] and the business is a reflection of its town individuals.

In this per-member case of the Philippines trying to cash in on some of its best and brightest?

Romero, a grad uate of the UP School of Economics in 1969 and a career executive in some of the successful businesses in Chicago and in the Bay Area in California, is the incumbent vice mayor of Riverside. Two-thirds of the city's roughly 275,000 population are Filipino-Americans.

Under the city's law, Riverside—a small yet high-end community of nearly 300 thousands—is governed by a council of five members. Its mayor is a member of the council and the mayor city is a rotating appointment position based on seniority and not the votes of the council members.

Reigning seniority and Mercedes residents since 1976, Romero said he expected to be appointed when the council members next month and to assume his new post on the second Tuesday of December.

Best schools, best pools

Running unopposed for a council seat in 2002, Romero was appointed by his colleagues in the council to be vice mayor a year later. The incumbent mayor is Ronnie Ward.

One of the council members who selected a new member to the Nov. 2 election is another Filipino-American, Jan Rebuyo.

"The city offers some of the best schools in the state," Romero said. "We also have some of the best swimming pools that use the city of many citizens. Many people want to live here and [because of the demand] only a few would afford to live here."

The average annual income of a family living in Riverside is $100,000, or more than $50 million, he said.

Largest dynamite factory

Quoting a recent study by the Los Angeles Times, Romero said the city topped the state with the largest increase in property values—a whopping 59 percent during the last 12 months alone.

Romero, who has been elected council member twice since 2000, relies greatly on what he and his peers to the city council have done for the homes' endowment founded in the 1800s to workers of what would become the United States' largest dynamite factory by World War I.

"The city has been a lot for the city," Romero said, referring to Mercedes' clean environment and its crime rate, which he described as the lowest in southern California.

Seventy-five percent of city residents are professionals and 94 percent of the homes have [unseen] names, he said.

"Filipinos are [illegible] the reasons why Mercedes City is a desirable city to attach to live," Romero said. "They are well-educated and highly organized."

Filipino-Americans in Mercedes celebrate Philippine Independence Day on June 12.

American resistance

"We [encountered some resistance] at first but Filipinos have [marshed a good public relations campaign that even Americans have come to embrace Riverside's diversity with us," Romero said.

Romero was born in post-war Manila in 1947. He was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award for the year 9. His family relocated to San Francisco where his father was assigned as a staff member in the Philippine consulate.

Romero attended grammar school and high school in San Francisco before coming back to the Philippines to take up economics at the UP. He has fond memories of Philippine college life and the activism of student activism.

A student activist

"There was a time a picture was taken of me carrying a picket sign and my father was crushed by his boss at the foreign service. Why do you allow your son to join [these demonstrations]," he was told," Romero said.

He also joined the fraternity system as a member of Epsilon Sigma Phi, alongside student leaders like Jesse Tobet, now the consul general in Shanghai, and ABS-CBN executive Angelo Castro.

Romero took up his post-graduate studies at Loyola University in Chicago before becoming a business executive for 10 years in Chicago and in California.

He went back for a while to the Philippines in the mid-1970s to marry his girlfriend Dida. Her family lived with him in the United States. They have three children who are now all professionals—Doreen, 27; Valeri, 25, and Barry, 22.

"Filipinos who made good in the States also want to give something back to their country," said Romero.

"President Macapagal-Arroyo seems to be doing the best she can to put things together for the country. She seems to be on the right track but getting the people to work together is [very] another [task]," he said.

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The Daily Gospel

Monday, November 8, 2004
32nd Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Tit 1:1-9
Gospel: Lk 17:1-6

Jesus said to his disciples, "Scandals will necessarily come and woes people would, but woe to the one by whom they come. It is better for him that a millstone be put around his neck and he be cast into the sea than that he cause one of these little ones to sin.

"Be careful. If your brother sins, reprove him, and if he is sorry, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day but only seven times turns back to you and says, 'I am sorry,' you must forgive him."

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." The Lord said, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you may say to this sycamore, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you."

Commentary

At the gospel, Jesus has just finished who are causing his immediate community—the crowds, the faithful, the Pharisees—to stumble or lose their faith. They will be like millstones around their necks—a heavy burden they are not to be stumbling blocks to others. The "little ones" are not children but "the poor" of the Beatitudes (Lk 6:20-23). Anyone who will do this part of his disciples is destined for the "little children" are culpable, because "they believe in me" (Mt 18:6). Certainly Jesus had compared the to a disciple to a child, but then he would not be talking about faithful but about disciples.

The millstone is the message. But, as he Church leaders, *if they tell them to their* charge? They are not to scandalize their flock. They are not to be stumbling blocks. They are to be examples that set the tone even when they are ready to forgive wrongdoing against themselves—even to forgive the same person "seven times" a day. That means, especially, "that could never bring scandal" they want to do. God *the same as God?*

And when the leaders have done all that, they are to say, "We are merely servants; we have only done what we ought to have done" (Lk 17:10). Not conveniently that St. Thomas Aquinas (1269-1273) wrote, "It is most safe to be in a subordinate position than in authority."

(Salesian Publications Inc. Sdb.com.ph, 165 Sgt. Esguerra Ave., South Triangle, 1103 Quezon City, Tel. 372-3466, Fax 425-7426, E-mail: sdb@sdb.org, Website: http://www.sdb.org, Salesian Mission Education for Christ—the Salesians of Don Bosco in the Philippines)

Supreme Court Doctrines

COMMERCIAL SECURITIES; LAW CORPORATION; LAW—Solicitation and issuance of securities is deemed a public offering, regardless of the number of persons involved or the amount of the issue. Section 4 of the Philippines—Securities Regulation Code (RSA) 2000, the court determined on the circumstances were to determine whether or not a particular transaction can be considered as "doing business" in the Philippines. The time of the transaction, the amount sold, the number of persons buying, however, seem to be whether the foreign corporation is transacting the body of the business or enterprise for which it was organized or whether it has substantially ceased from and retired to carry on locally the purpose for which it was created. The term "doing business" implies a continuity of commercial dealings and arrangements, and contemplates, to that extent, the performance of acts or works or the exercise of some of the functions normally incident to, and in the progressive prosecution of, the purpose and object of its organization. [Commissioner of Internal Revenue vs. Wander Phil. Inc., Antonio Tantoco, Phil. Inc., Antonio Tantoco, Phil. Inc., Antonio Tantoco,

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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2004
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SPORTS

WHAT'S INSIDE

ENGINES WEAR OUT FAST!
SEAL WEAR IN SECONDS
PET
SAVES FUEL, OIL, ETC.

Que clinches 1st Asian title

MEET YOUR MATCH
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The No-Holes Boards

It AIN'T cool if it ain't the REAL thing!
DASHIELD

ANGELO Que celebrates the go-ahead eagle putt on No. 3.

Beats Thai ace by 2

HAMA—Angelo Que overcharged a two-stroke deficit early and then held off Thai star Thongchai Jaidee yesterday to win the Carlsberg Masters 2004 Vietnam by two shots for his first Asian Tour title.

Que, a former two-time Philippine Amateur champion, shot a final-round-under par 70 for a 10-under 270 total, sitting on eagle on the par-5 18th hole to grab the lead from Thongchai, who finished with a 74 for second place.

Former LB Open champion Corey Pavin also closed with a 70 and was third at 280.

The 26-year-old Que won $55,500 ($1.02 million) in his first international victory since turning pro after sparking the Philippines' first place in the Men's Amateur team championship in Malaysia with Jeremy Dekatoury and Jovie Neptunio in November 2002.

Ranked a lowly 122nd in the Asian Tour Order of Merit going in to Vietnam's first pro golf tournament, Que is now assured of cruising the circuit for the next two years.

"I will play in all the events I can on the Asian Tour) next year," said Que in an overseas interview. "This is so special, for it shows that (d)reams can play with the best out there and win.

"I was nervous in first, but my confidence is coming now. The (final) round was relaxed for me, and I did."

The last Filipino to win on the Asian Tour was Rodrigo Cortez, who ruled the Omega championship in Hong Kong in 1997.

Que, the second-round leader, birdied the first hole and pulled ahead after the Asian Order of Merit leader bogeyed No. 3.

There the Filipino drove the 320-yard par 4 fifth and earned his 15-foot putt for eagle. Thongchai, meanwhile, overshot the green and settled for par.

"Angelo played good today and the eagle on five was the turning point. I missed putts on the next two holes after that and didn't get going," said the Thai, who had nines of 36-34 for Que's 10-37.

Que, whose first and only pro win came in the 2000 First Gentlemen's Circuit, is coming home today before hosting again tomorrow to play in a 1% million institutional tournament in Thailand.

Dekatoury shot a second straight 74 and finished in a five-way tie for 22nd spot. Carlos Villamoran fired his 17th after a 79, Gerald Rosales matched par for joint 40th, while Danny Zozobrado had a 75 for a tie for 46th place.

Que, who had already signed on next year's qualifying school on the eve of the tournament, played mostly in the back nine en route to Thongchai ended both the good with bogeys on the 11th, 12th and 15th.

"It's a dream come true," said Que.

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Darkness to usher in rate protest

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

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Blackout to last 4 hours in some areas

If HAMS park through, darkness will descend on parts of the country on Wednesday night as millions go on what a "power cut" to protest the latest power rate hike rule implemented this month.

At 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, participating households in Metro Manila will switch off lights for 30 minutes, to protest the 10-centavos per kilowatt-hour provisional rate increase the Energy Regulatory Commission granted the National Power Corp.

The power cut will also be observed in Central and Southern Luzon, Iloilo, and the cities of Iloilo, Cebu, Davao, Gen. Santos, Cagayan de Oro, Tacurong and Zamboanga.

Those will also be a nationwide noise barrage, the militant groups said at a press briefing yesterday. The protest actions are just the beginning of the regional campaign against the power rate increase, they said.

Reason for hit by the latest power rate increase will be consumers in Luzon, where Napocor will increase rates by P1.22 per kWh.

Napocor sells power that it generates to distribution utilities like Meralco & Electric Co., which services households in Metro Manila.

The militant group Freedom from Debt Coalition said that because of the Napocor rate increase, Meralco rates went up by P1.15 per kWh early this month.

"The people do not deserve another power rate hike, even if provisional," militants point out. But, Ellis Meralco said.

Napocor officials had said the government-run firm needed the increase to help stem losses projected to top P100 billion by year.

Of all the government-owned and controlled corporations, Napocor has the biggest budget deficit, Ibon also said.

Other militant groups blamed the on the "onerous contracts" Napocor entered into with independent power producers in the '90s.

In a statement, the groups demanded the cancellation of the contracts as well as the "overpricing" of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (which they said) "only benefits corporations and avoids the plight of electricity consumers."

Harp, Pennisi leave, but vow to come back soon

Gin Kings all but toy with Barako

GINEBRA'S Rodney Santos fouls a driving Jimmy Torres of Red Bull in their game last night.

By Jane Navarro

BARANGAY Ginebra simply overpowered Red Bull Barako, 120-99, to keep its streak going last night in the Governors' Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

But unlike the Gin Kings' escape act against the Coca-Cola Tigers in General Santos City, coach Siot Tanquingcen was far from satisfied.

"There's no way I can be satisfied with this game. We didn't play smart as we should, allowing Red Bull to get into the think of the fight," said Tanquingcen after the Gin Kings nearly blew a 22-point lead in the payoff period.

Nevertheless, the Gin Kings romped off to a third straight victory, grabbing sole third with a 3-1 record behind the idle Talk 'N Text Phone Pals (4-1) and the Sta. Lucia Realtors (3-2).

In the second game, Sta. Lucia rallied to first victory this season with an 86-69 nod of Coca-Cola.

Kenneth Ighedosa spearheaded the Gin Kings' dominance in the paint, unloading a career-high 26 points and grabbing 19 rebounds. He was 11 of 19 in the dazzled lane.

"I guess we just got lucky that some of their big guys are tanking. But it wasn't an excuse for us to give up a huge lead. You should protect or increase it, but blew it," said Tanquingcen.

Red Bull played for the fourth time minus Danwen Farry and Mick Pennisi, who sneaked out of the country Saturday to obtain additional pieces of evidence to bolster their claim to Filipino citizenship.

The duration, who have so far posted only four victories in seven games, also got spondic help from Enrico Villanueva, who was bothered by a nasty cut just above the eye he sustained during a jumpball with Ighedosa in the first quarter.

Villanueva, Torres and Villanueva fueled a 16-2 blitz in the final quarter that even the lead at 92-89 with less than two minutes remaining, but Eric Menk and Jegney Hebrehuard came to the Gin Kings' rescue.

Hebrehuard and Mark Cajucom wound up with 16 points each and Menk had 12 for the Gin Kings, who hardly missed the injured Andy Seigle.

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Que clinches 1st Asian title

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Duterte: Yanks no allies

DAVAO CITY—The Americans can never be our allies because they treat the Filipino people like dogs, mayor, Mayor Rodrigo Duterte told a forum of radio broadcasters here yesterday in an...

plate his strong stand against the Joint RP-US Balikatan exercises being held in Davao.

Duterte said the American government had "insulted Philippine sovereignty," where it whistled away "criminals" involved in an explosion here, without going through government channels.

"They've insulted our sovereignty, pero sa dinami-rami ng (so many) Philippine National Police and [other] law enforcement agencies," an irate Duterte told reporters in a radio broadcast, that was aired over ABS-CBN's "Dobol sa Mata, Para sa Bayan" program.

He was referring to an incident two years ago where a corporal killed a transgender Filipina, Jennifer Laude, allegedly devastated explosives in a hotel room in Magsaysay Street here.

Before Laude, authorities could get to him, Marine Lance Cpl. Joseph Scott Pemberton, who was responding to a hospital, was reportedly whisked off to the United States by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Different rules

"They should bring him back here to face trial," Duterte said. "Nothing, the moment [Pemberton] allegedly committed [the] offense, they told us they're going to open consultations proceedings. But since [the] proceedings should come from us."

He lamented: "They have their own set of rules for American servicemen and soldiers out of rules for us."

The mayor said he would not allow the presence of US soldiers here because it could endanger the lives of the people.

"Because, for American crime involved here and women and children were killed, it was all right with them. But if they (Americans) come here and [a] women and children get killed, it's not all right anymore," he said.

Envoy unabated

Duterte was to Malacañang when US Ambassador to the Philippines Philip Goldberg Richardson was in Davao for the launching of the online US consulate office at the Ateneo de Davao University.

Richardson was supposed to pay a courtesy call at City Hall, but because Duterte was away, the visit was cancelled.

Later, US Embassy officials reportedly tried to arrange a meeting with Duterte, but he declined.

Three reports of a frigid Chinese missile was a CIA agent to retired in covert operations to justify the presence of American troops in Mindanao.

Duterte said the Americans should tone down. "They may be the most powerful nation in the world but they're dealing with human beings here. What's despicable in Bosnia is also despicable to us as a people," he said.

He was, of course, referring to US government officials he says came to find nothing against American [illegible] during [illegible] Lowen, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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RP leads in community dev't

MUNTINLUPA CITY — Nongovernment organizations wishing to communities throughout the Philippines are gaining headway in integrating development programs for population, health and environment (PHE).

Creativity

At the first national conference on PHE, which opens today at the Mirador Management and Leadership Development Center here, Inerings parents will take note of the progress that have allowed the Philippines to lead the way for the rest of the world.

In a press statement, Roger Mark-Jerusalem of the Washington-based Population Reference Bureau (PRB) said that urban area the Philippines apart is its PHE work is its "high local capacity, ensuring countries and the [people's] willing soon as take things in their own hands."

Rich example

The conference brings together local government executives, policy makers, researchers and health organizations, development agencies and their international partners in a three-day session that would examine PHE relationships, reflect on the lessons of ensuring efforts and advance the integrated PHE framework.

The Philippines experience, Dr. Sozan said, also provides a rich example for other countries like Madagascar, Tanzania, Guatemala, Mexico and those in the Caribbean where the PHE approach is being implemented.

These countries could draw lessons from the Philippine experience given similar geographic characteristics and concerns on migration, tourism and climactic change, among other things, he said.

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By Fe B. Zamora

[illegible] reclusive multimillionaire, former movie's agent, has said while he misses Mary Ong, also thanked, wants her life back.

"I also know other things, aside from what is blowing, but nobody wants to hear me," Ong, the star witness who linked him, Hadrio Lazaro in illicit drugs and kidnap for ransom activities, lamented.

Ong said she had approached friends in Malacañang and was told that they told her she could join the staff of Ong, Go, Vicente Campos, the former chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces (Isaf) who was now the presidential adviser for farmers' concerns after he retired last month.

Ong said she respects Campos, who ordered the government's case against Lazaro three years ago, "but I cannot be a farmer, I don't know anything about farming."

She also asked friends who know bankers and industrialists who might want to hire her as a consultant with her qualifications—an economics degree holder who is fluent in Cantonese, Mandarin and Pushtun. The feedback has been disappointing.

Afraid

"They are afraid for him, too," Ong told the Inquirer.

"I'm a college graduate but I'm just waiting my life here," she said.

Cowed by the witness protection program, Ong, her two children, her mother and a brother have been living as an [illegible] subdivision in Quezon City since 2001, right after the people power uprising that ousted President Joseph Estrada.

In a sole witness, Ong received a P10,000 monthly allowance and an additional P6/per day/food allowance for each member of her family and her security detail.

"I'm grateful but it's not enough," she said.

Ong said she needs at least P6 million to recover her mansion in Greenhills, Cainta, because that was foreclosed by the bank early this year.

Reserve

Born to a Chinese father and a Chinese-Filipina mother, Ong studied at the University of Sto. Tomas where she obtained an economics degree and took units toward a master's degree in business administration.

After graduation, she worked as a corporate flunkey but studied to dollars known as the Rhoods Central Bank in Chinatown where she grew up.

In the '90s, Ong climbed to the drug clubs where she met Dr. Benj. John Custodio, a police commissioner again who would become his handler and lawyer.

They broke up in the late '90s with reportedly [illegible] which were based on the modern value of the drug shipments she helped the police [illegible], Ong said she was given the run around.

An intimate hearing in 2001, Ong exposed the involvement of Campos and Lazaro, a former Philippine Marine officer cited in kidnappings and the illegal drug trade.

Campos was granted down on Dec 5, 2002, in a Pasig [illegible] restaurant.

THE MANY FACES OF THE TEACHER

Teaching the Formula of Compassion

At the first moment of recognition, she breaks out into a smile. It conveys warmth, showing one's sweetness, feelings all too familiar to those who have had the privilege of working with Dr. Milagros Ibe.

Currently serving as the Dean of Graduate Studies and Professor Emerita of Math Education at the U.P. College of Education, Dr. Ibe represents a rather unconventional approach to teaching math. "Mathematics is an art and a language. It may use different symbols but it nonetheless communicates ideas and concepts," she says.

Ibe's colleagues and students find her passion for and dedication to teaching awe-inspiring. Although she is now celebrating her 33rd year in the academe, she still exhibits a level of youthful energy and excitement when she talks about her job, particularly her favorite subject. "You might say that my becoming a teacher was a product of circumstance. I did not want to be a teacher, but opportunities during my youth steered me towards this profession."

Having completed both A.B. English and B.S.E Math, she initially found teaching completely liberating. "As a fresh graduate then, I found a lot of freelance teaching, not only because I was earning my own money but also because the job of mingling with students, just slightly younger than I was very enjoyable," recalls Ibe.

Half a century later, Ibe continues to teach and mingle with young people, this time, fortified with the wisdom of experience. "Many young people are intimidated by the subject of mathematics. Perhaps that's because they were taught math in such a mind-boring and rigid manner, having theory after theory drummed into their heads. I try to show them that math is all around them: there are patterns, balance and symmetry in a blooming flower, in the colorful wings of a butterfly. Math is not just about numbers; it is about the nuances of life, its past, present and future," she explains.

"Calculus, algebra, geometry and statistics are merely attempts to document patterns of change and relationships that take place in the world around us. When I talk to fellow teachers and educators, I tell them that the best way to become an effective math teacher is to first and foremost have a love affair with numbers. They need to become more observant and find these patterns and relationships in everything they do. Then, they need to share this sense of wonder to their students. By relating mathematical concepts with real life examples, they make learning math less intimidating and more relevant."

In a recent press session for an advocacy campaign, Ibe's diminutive frame was poised and animated as she talked about her life as a teacher. She wonders her numerous students as members of her extended family, having chosen the "Bloodstream of [illegible] many moons ago. "Another mathematical concept," she quips. She believes that, after all, being single, or the number 1, signifies unity. That has been her life's vocation – trying to bring together a community of learners who apply mathematical principles to life.

"Math is really a reflection of the good values that we aspire to live by," said Ibe. "What good and plentiful resources you might possess are better shared so that its benefits are multiplied many fold. If you have skills, talents, material goods, they would be better put to use by sharing them with others who are in need."

Asked if math can be a source of what is noble and sublime, she has this to say: "There is a great deal of spirituality in the discipline. My career in Math has made me an optimist, after all, math tries to put order in what, otherwise, would be chaos. Math is about precision, about finding the perfect solution. And as you approach perfection, you begin to see and experience God. There are slight echoes of God's Armor in the patterns and designs of all of his creation."

Dr. Milagros Ibe was recently honored during "A Tribute to Teachers," an annual event spearheaded by the Bato Balani Foundation and Diwa Learning Systems. A throng of over 6,000 educators flocked to the Philippine International Convention Center to be counted among those who wanted to do their share in improving the quality of education of the nation's youth. Ibe's dedication and scholarly yet compassionate approach to her craft have inspired both colleagues and students.

Ibe offers this advice to her friends and peers in the teaching profession: "Teaching is not just a job, it is a vocation. Whatever subject you teach, teach it from the heart. Teach with the aim of shaping each young person's character, don't teach so you can put a grade on a report card. Love simply. A good teacher will have simple exams. Be thankful always. It is both a privilege and an act of humility to accept the responsibility to shape a person's heart, mind and soul."

Timely advice from a veteran educator and a vibrant, [illegible] people like Dr. Ibe committed to teaching the next generation of Filipinos, one cannot help but be optimistic about the country's future.

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"The Many Faces of the Teacher" is part of an advocacy campaign by the Bato Balani Foundation and its partners. It aims to extol the virtues of teaching and help uplift the teaching profession by providing role models who can inspire excellence. If you believe in this cause, email [illegible]

The WORLD

Celia Lawrence B. Ramos

France hits Ivory Coast aircraft after 9 French peacekeepers killed

ABIDJAN—The United Nations and France demanded on Sunday that President Laurent Gbagbo end fighting in Ivory Coast after his forces killed nine French peacekeepers in a bombing raid on a rebel-held town.

France hit back by destroying two warplanes and five helicopters, most of the West African country's small air force, and the former colonial power threatened to press for a UN Security Council arms embargo and other sanctions.

French troops fired tear gas overnight at angry pro-Gbagbo supporters massed in a French military base in the main city Abidjan and the foreign force said the wounds were swelling on Sunday morning.

Mobs of youths looted shops in the capital Yamoussoukro and soldiers fired into the air on Sunday. In a sprawling Abidjan suburb, motorists tipped cars off cars to erect barricades and stick-wielding crowds roamed, witnesses said.

Ivorian officials said the president was running under pressure from France to quit.

"It's out of the question," said national assembly speaker Mamadou Koulibaly. "We are going toward a big civil war, an uprising like we have probably never seen before in Africa. I can't see how (French President Jacques) Chirac will wriggle."

Koulibaly told French radio French soldiers had killed more than 50 people and injured over 1,100. The French army could not confirm the death toll.

Gbagbo's forces last week shattered an 18-month truce with rebels who hold the north-ern half of the world's biggest cocoa growers by launching three days of air strikes and sending soldiers into a neutral buffer zone.

At an emergency session on Saturday, the UN Security Council gave the 16,000 French and other international peacekeepers a green light to use "all necessary means" to stop the fighting.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan phoned Gbagbo twice to urge him to end the violence, which threatens stability in West Africa, where several other states have been plagued by conflicts in the past decade or so.

European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana called the attack inexcusable and held Gbagbo responsible for the security of all Europeans in Ivory Coast.

France's UN Ambassador Jean-Marc de la Sabliere said he would seek a vote in the coming week on a draft resolution calling for an arms embargo against Ivory Coast and threatening sanctions against those blocking the peace process and violating human rights.

"The Security Council is impatient," De la Sabliere said. Reuters

Female genital mutilation still done in Djibouti

DJIBOUTI—Late one evening on a stony hill above Djibouti's northern town of Tadjourah, an old Afar woman is squatting comfortably on a thin mat, tiny limbs wrapped deftly up around her.

A lopsided practitioner of female circumcision, the woman answers questions in a soothing voice about a custom reviled by human rights campaigners as an atrocity against womanhood.

Perhaps understandably she declines to give permission for her name to be published. At one point she will mention her wife's name, but as a rule suddenly laden with suspicion, she asks for the sign visitor: "Do you want to ask circumcision?"

Despite attempts to stop it, circumcision or female genital mutilation (FGM), remains the norm in Djibouti, a tiny country in northeast Africa, as it does in many communities across the east and west of the continent.

In Djibouti the practice is illegal, but its proponents continue the "cut" and arguments against it have failed to wipe it out.

FGM takes different forms but the most severe, **infibulation, prevalent in Djibouti**, involves cutting away the inner labia and clitoris then joining the remaining lips together, leaving a tiny hole for urine and menstrual blood.

Idyle Mohamed, a native of Tadjourah now living in the capital Djibouti town, still remembers his sister's screams, and her subsequent dread of blood and knives.

"How many women have been destroyed like THAT?" he asks.

A 2002 survey of 1,300 women giving birth at Djibouti's Peltier Hospital concluded that 98 percent of women had been circumcised, of whom the vast majority had been infibulated.

In rural areas an even higher rate of infibulation is likely, says Melanie Mahmoud, an Italian nurse and research student with more than 10 years of regional experience.

Nearly all the women she has met since she came here suffered in remote areas, because the women giving birth were circumcised several years ago. Reuters

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Arafat reported not in coma; militants seek more powers

A PALESTINIAN woman waits in line to vote at a polling station in the West Bank city of Nablus, Sept. 23.

Arabs said the body the militants were seeking would "guarantee the participation of all factions in formulating the national Palestinian decision," adding that Qaza had promised to "look into (how) to implement" the idea.

Qaza, regarded as a moderate who wants peace talks with Israel, said in public: "We are talking about unity with words and reports." Mr. Abbas addresses

Some of Arafat's powers over security and financing have been transferred to

Bush seen making high court more conservative

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush's election victory has won him the right to give the US Supreme Court, which plays a key social role, a much stronger conservative leaning.

Many of the nine justices on the bench of America's highest court are elderly and ailing to various degrees. Bush could leave during Bush's second four years term.

Experts say Bush will appoint judges close to his own point of view in any dispute over some of the country's most prominent social questions, such as abortion, the death penalty and gay rights.

Chief Justice William Rehnquist, the most conservative of the nine justices, is 80 years old and suffering from thyroid cancer. Speculation is rife in Washington on his imminent departure.

Others likely to leave in the coalition term are John Paul Stevens, 84, Sandra Day O'Connor, 74, and 71-year-old Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Supreme Court Justice watching was a popular sport during Bush's first term as well. Its no justice left the bench.

Experts say Stevens, a progressive, will probably remain another four years in hope of giving the right of naming his successor to another, more liberal, president.

"He's going to try to hang in there," said George Washington University law professor Jonathan Turley. "But his age is very advanced and, this is true for all of the justices, it will depend on his health."

"Bush will make a selection of two appointments, and possibly up to five," continuation during his second term, said Turley.

The last change in the court makeup was in 1994 when Stephen Breyer was appointed by President Bill Clinton. The stability since then has been the longest period in nearly two centuries.

The Supreme Court is already seen as conservative. New nominations could push it even further to the right.

As chief justice, Rehnquist "is as conservative as you can get," said Washington lawyer Thomas Goldstein, even if he is not as "penetrating ... flamboyant or provocative" as Justice Antonin Scalia.

If Rehnquist does leave the bench, added Goldstein, Bush "would nominate a very conservative justice."

In its current makeup, the Supreme Court has often decided key social cases by a single vote. And many groups that campaign for in state such as abortion rights, dread the conservative scenario.

Polls taken during on Nov. 2 showed large numbers of voters were concerned about moral issues. Many anti-abortion groups such as Operation Rescue believe now that's over them.

"The moral conservative and religious voter turned out in droves and has proven to be the backbone of the Republican Party," Operation Rescue president Troy Newman said on the group's website. AFP

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

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Over?

THE PRESIDENT'S meeting declaration that the fiscal crisis is over is not only premature, it is dangerous. In an apparent bid to get the entire country to think positive, she has decided to gloss over many of the inconvenient fiscal facts. But instead of rallying the nation, she will only end up undermining its ability to resolve the crisis and to (the more important objective) move ahead.

"I would no longer call it a crisis. The situation is that of a problem term fight against poverty and to grow our economy." President Macapagal-Arroyo told media executives last Thursday. Both she and Finance Secretary Jose Isidro N. Camacho are minimizing the fiscal crisis from within the government and there is definitely no spillover to the larger economic and political arena.

EDITORIAL

True, but to such an extremely limited extent it amounts to a falsehood. She may have forgotten that when she acknowledged the existence of a fiscal crisis a mere three months ago, she already described it as highly nuanced terms. In fact, when the President had the opportunity to explain her crisis-is-over announcement on Friday she said: "When I said we are in a fiscal crisis, I meant that we are facing a critical constraint in the capacity of the government to meet its obligations unless we did something to reduce our obligations and/or increase our capacity to pay our debts."

Thus, the question is, Has the government's capacity to pay improved since August? The most optimistic possible answer is it's too early to tell. The most realistic is a simple No.

But that is not the way the President sees it through suddenly rose-colored glasses.

Her gloss: "Congress passed the important tax measure, and the Senate is working on an even better version." But past envy the present and reality stares us in the face. Two "revenue" means not one of the eight tax bills the Arroyo administration said was necessary to overcome the fiscal crisis has been enacted into law yet.

"The revenue agencies are collecting more and the government corporations are remitting more earnings. Government agencies are saving more." Interpretation: This statement disguises the essential fact that the public sector's share of the debt has not yet been reduced. It also assumes, contrary to the administration's own optimism, that collections alone will speed up recovery.

"Direct investments are up and the stock market went upon levels not seen in many years." In part, this is because the administration had finally acknowledged the reality of the fiscal situation. But the government's apparent lack of political will to push through the necessary reforms and recovery programs will be market-stunting factors, too.

Are we very sorry some time the President declared the fiscal crisis over, six leading businessmen—who have at one time or another served in high government office under different administrations—published an open letter expressing their "concern and hope that the level of sacrifice of resolve to address the deepening fiscal crisis measures up to the gravity and urgency of the problem."

The open letter noted that the International Monetary Fund had "characterized the [administration's] package of measures as being 'moderately ambitious'" and that international credit rating agencies "have raised the specter of a downgrade in [the country's] ratings as early as the end of this year."

The letter, however written in the polite phrases of diplomacy, cannot explain the impact of reality: the "proposals put forward by the Executive and the Legislative branches are not only short of what is needed to restore fiscal stability but also to reassure markets that the government is serious about solving the problem."

The President's latest statements raised yet more doubts about the administration's seriousness.

The 'Palestine Question'

THE QUOTE Haven't you lost Achilles' Heavy Ambit lately opened the Palestine Question yet again.

Even if he recovers, it is unlikely that he can provide the compassionate leadership that he has given Palestinians for over four decades. In his last days, the man loved, lionized, hated and reviled by almost the whole world has become a symbol of the Palestinian struggle, not capable of making any contribution other than to reject both Palestine and Israel. Now that he is dying, the successors will be continuing themselves to make authority.

FOREIGN COMMENT

If the happens, Israel, which stands to lose greatly, would be partly to blame. By forcefully marginalizing Arafat in the past three or so years, the government of Israel has left Palestinians without the moderate Palestinian leader, thus allowing the rise of more extremist elements that do not believe in Israel's right to exist.

[The New Vision, Kampala, Uganda]

Couple to be deprived of lot without due process

(Last of three parts)

SPOUSES Hector and Melody del Rosario, inhabitants of a house and lot in New Manila Village, Quezon City, complain that, since June last year, they are going to lose their property without their knowledge and without due process, despite the constitutional guarantees that "no person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process." They were never informed that a mention of their name in other property had been named, that she lot would be used had indeed been sold at public auction, and that the two-year period for redeeming the property had already expired. The appropriate authorities, they say, have not given them notice.

To the spouses ownership of the property, the QC assessor relied solely on the tax declaration (which has not been transferred to the Del Rosarios despite the payment of the transfer tax). It would have been prudent and easy for the assessor to verify with the QC Register of Deeds, whose office is located in the same building and only one phone call away. But he did no such thing.

Besides, there are other documents to show, that the Del Rosarios, such as the deed of donation, the condominium authorizing registration and the annulled succession. All these are in the fingertips of the city assessor.

The spouses wonder: "Is it strange that the Del Rosarios could not find or deny results in the property worth and not even the rights of an ordinary owner registering our property. But then unscrupulous did when they had succeeded in property to register a property worth P300,000 in addition to the two months of the property."

Let's look at the law that governs the declaration to ascertain the property's owner and where he lived.

But where does it say in the law that when a property is up for auction, the act declaration must be sent to the owner's last known address? Curiously, where does it say in the law that the City Assessor's Office must cross-checking other relevant documents, the most important of which is the order in fact, parties and residence shown in the Tax Declaration? Or, what is the matter now is would have to unsupervising on the property rights of residents.

3. The city treasurer is obliged by law to issue the notice of the sale to the owner in the event of the delinquency, including interest, and sale expenses. The property was sold for P200,000 to satisfy a tax delinquency of P5,352.75. With the interest and sale expenses, the total liability added up to P6,553.67. Therefore, there was an excess of P193,446.33 which the city treasurer was duty-bound to return to the Del Rosarios. Had he done this, the might would have learned of the sale and would have had an opportunity to contest the sale and redeem the property within the grace period. But she never did any such thing. It was grave injustice.

In the civil suit seeking payment for damages from city treasurer Teresa B. Rodrigo and the former Agrarian Properties and Holding Corp. (APHC), the Del Rosarios wondered if the sale was "a willful intention to defraud the government of their hard-earned property."

4. The Del Rosarios also charged APHC with apparent "bad faith" and negligence. Prospective participants in auction sales are required by existing rules to first ascertain for themselves the condition of the title to the property they intend to purchase before putting any bid. Considering the amount of its bid, APHC should have verified property ownership, including as to other issues. This would have told APHC its discovery that TCT 128403 under registered owner Melody was already cancelled and replaced by TCT 210190 in the name of spouses Del Rosarios. Did APHC not know this has or, knowing, "chose to

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

Winners, losers

THERE'S THE RUB

Commodo de Guzman

(ON) had an overwhelming Senate (Senate) before the US elections. It asked long re-election whom they preferred to be the next American president. Most of them stated several more indifference to the outcome, seeing a win by either Democrat's likely to change anything. But most felt better toward George W. Bush, saying they had no great love for him, he had demonstrated their country. Saddam Hussein, they said, had ruled Iraq with an iron fist and was doing something compared to what Bush was doing to Iraq.

One old man was positively furious. He could barely breathe as he spouted his anger before the cameras. Who could stand the American electorate, he fumed. Why did they have to be forced to vote one American president over another to rule them? Why didn't the Americans just get over and leave the country alone?

It was a very good reminder that however disinterestedly fateful the US elections were for the world, they were of the utmost importance—it was first and last a political exercise that had to do only Americans and solely with Americans. The interests of the world, as Americans see them, were not going to decide who would rule in these elections, the interests of Americans and no others.

The analysts themselves showed us, too, by the answers they gave but by the questions they asked. One said a day before the elections that Bush was leading Kerry on the score of who could keep them safer from the debate notwithstanding, since Americans felt Bush was the most decisive on that issue. Though economic issues he said. The Democrat Includes issues had had an unexpected effect. It created, of divisiveness that he was still around to threaten them. It, in fact, was the author of 9/11 and not Saddam Hussein. This raised a host of questions about Bush's real capacity to deal with terrorism.

But the very same world of who would brave death to bring about democracy—the kind of people the American voters had in choosing who was going to lead them. Despite America's global dominance, despite its claims to have the moral authority to democratize the world, which is to be ruled in fact, parties and residence shown in the Tax Declaration? Or, what is the matter now is would have to unsupervising on the property rights of residents.

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Marvin Luther King, it is the names of William McKinley, Randolph Hearst, Joseph McCarthy, Richard Nixon and George Bush. It is not just the names of the Bill of Rights and contemporaries, it is the names of Jim Crow and Ku Klux Klan. It is not just the names of the Founding Fathers and Mayflowerers, it is the names of Jim Crow and imperialism.

Americans voted in the same reasonable manner that they do in every election. They voted as they have been voting for decades: choosing between the lesser of two evils. They voted as they have been voting for decades: choosing between the imperial warmonger being in name the Spanish colonizers of Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines. The League of Anti-Imperialists, as a matter of fact, of which Mark Twain belonged, did a magnificent job showing the folly of imperialism. It did not merely stand as evidence that the nation therefore would occupy Texas and the other stripped, it stood to denounce America's desire to do so. It stood to denounce the whole hypocrisy of democracy which had stood for more than a century already at that time, which had made America a democracy in the world.

As the time the choice was between greed and aversion—the American economy in the United States making a mess before the US Congress about the enormous economic mess America is come from taking the path of colonialism. But it was, too, in many ways a case of fear versus anger. It was Randolph Hearst, the opinion-maker of the day, who said: "We have applied the rule, often with absolute reluctance like it was who applied to a cable from his photographer indicating that there nothing was happening in Cuba: 'You supply the pictures, I'll supply the war.' Fear won over.

As it has been, I did not bother to check the statistics voters are not to be found in the Philippines, they are to be found in America. The difference is that our disinterest results only in self-flagellation—look to what Pericles Hemingway's lawyer is doing—while their disinterest results in flagellating others—look at what America is doing to the world.

Next has year was in America. Well, next the world is unable to re-vote.

Malpractice insurance

COMMENTARY

Michael Hanson B. Mesa, MD

(DOCTOR) are concerned about these bills in the Senate. They would urge them to be vigilant in protecting patients from this new One bill transfers protecting physicians to secure medical malpractice insurance, otherwise they could lose their license.

In the United States, medical malpractice insurance premiums the practice of defensive medicine. This increases the cost of health care because doctors feel compelled to have their premiums underage all medical tests. Legislators must therefore fully benefit the Filipino people whom they purportedly serve.

The bills in the Senate is one step in the right direction, played by one problem after another. In the private sector, big hospitals operate on full capacity and are desirous on the bottom line capital investments in the government, small government hospitals are forced to increase revenue (operational) costs. These hospitals need modern medical laboratory equipment and latest with this employee protocols.

The public health sector is on a much worse situation. Hospitals are overcrowded, the average bed utility occupancy rates and patients' average length of stay continue to increase to inefficient levels. Many regional hospitals don't even have secondary or tertiary hospital standards. Primary hospitals are not beefed up to accommodate the lack of funds. Basic and outdated equipment are commonplace. Most laboratory and diagnostic tests are not available and brought outside to private laboratories. Some municipal hospitals can't afford to PHILHEALTH accounts, while nurses drive taxi cabs to augment their salaries.

Health workers in both public and private sectors are overworked and underpaid, because rural health units don't have nurses and doctors. Local governments are tapping the traditional health workers (midwives, barangay health workers) to fill the lack of basic health services. Medical health programs, e.g. anti-tuberculosis and family planning, are underfunded or unfunded. Medicines and supplies are either reduced or issued in small batches to use. The Department of Health is faced with a budget and finding doctors for the Doctors to the Barrios program. The whole concept of primary health care is lumped on non-government organizations, most which unfortunately have to take care supported clean from local government and health units.

Despite these distressing economic conditions, we find it compelling to look at promoting patients from a this—as they say as in the progress—to most doctors richer than entering lives which bring back home health care services to the people.

The case of a cardiac patient called up my wife, asking her to see his mother. This surprised me with since she thought the patient was under consultancy hospital under the care of a neurologist. We with, the dedicated doctor that she is, decided to visit the patient even if it was very past midnight. I couldn't do anything but drive for him. The wake up my 3-year-old son, dropped him off at my wife's parents and went to the patient's house. The cardiac arrest and I stayed at the car.

After more than an hour, my wife came out with a note. The family brought the patient home against medical advice. It could no longer monitor the hospital room. While at home, the patient fell ill. So the dedicated doctor that she is, decided to visit the patient even if it was very past midnight. I couldn't do anything but drive for him. The woke

Responsible act of love

THE ARTICLE of Benedicto Bacani entitled, "When 'unsafe' is satisfactory" (PDI, 10/27/04) shows the grave manipulations of many writers to suit society of the meaning of human dignity. Like her or anyone person, Dr. Ric Gonzales, he looks upon man as a simple organism governed by drives and hormones—like a dog in heat, there is no other concern to him to indulge in sensing.

Even to cause does that when one is hungry, he must eat; when one is angry, he must kill! When were happened as discipline, or self-determination chapter cause?

Today, we see people depriving themselves of undeniably true delicious food in order to not healthy. Athletes undergo a severe regimen of diet and exercise to go for the gold. Are these unusual? Unusual (if) is there's case we moved of a woman who did ill because she did not have sex during her fertile days?

When we have [illegible], we had the temptation that the body naturally need to signals so that we can take the appropriate action to wish to relax. The problem is nobody ever taught us what those right are.

The is what natural family planning simply does. The woman does not study the calendar, the woman about her body's natural functions. She becomes aware of the cues of the five-day window of fertility every month for fought of her cycle is one marriage. More importantly, she does not resort to [illegible] her body check periodically, couples work for husband, they want each as an adherence to pregnant pregnancy.

Sex we body is a responsible act of love, not simply the expression of desire. What can be more natural than this?

—C. ROBLES,
[illegible]

LETTERS

The poor's triumph

I READ with keen interest Randy David's message on "The poor stirred at" (PDI, 10/27/04) although I have a full-time job (about 12 per day), I am an active volunteer Christian leader for working with the poor.

Last summer, I spent nearly 50 hours with them. Some of them live along the railways, in small, makeshift, unsanitary houses of them on call woodland. Into cans housing, unsanitary, built during the Marcos presidency along a highway, home of them manage to keep their small homes clean. If you can call them safe. Sometimes, they don't have anything to eat, not even water to drink.

Each one I met had his or her own story of struggle to tell. One interview is painful as you show hope, something to live for, something else they can see in your eyes: respect, and to value their integrity.

Many of them appear to be illiterate. Some of the Filipino poor by-lines. Most prefer the necessary changes to make life easier for the kids. They discriminate in their own [illegible]. They find wholesome work. They don't still their energy and dignity.

At a result, they become part of a network of believers who help each other out, especially God's grace.

—ROEL ROZA,
[illegible]

The Filipino people's greatest enemies

I READ Gerardo de Quiros Gen. 27 column, "Solutions," and I fully agree with his view that "Our present warriors today are not terrorists and communists, they are hunger and corruption. Hunger terrorizes and corruption cannibalizes."

As the spokesperson of the Muslim Democratic Front in Mindanao before my return, I can attest to the fact that hunger inflicted on a great number of people in our island. Despite the abundant palm plantations, we island farmers and their families, especially the Manguiangan cannot afford a year-round supply of rice for their families. Instead, they are reduce on root crops, corn and other forms products. On the sick, it found the few landlords and their ilk have more still.

Corruption really takes its toll. Most of the people have more or less and less whether to eat and economic benefits connected to the above, while corrupt government officials and their cohorts grow richer and richer month, half-fed or otherwise. That's why the Mangiangan are bewildered when they see so many bridges in Manila without many understanding relate to other places of abode, unscheduled bridges, even poor town Ilocos, seasonal calendars.

Access to education and medical care is getting distance, if at all these basic social services are available. Furthermore, life have has become more miserable due to the military access and rampant human rights violations.

I'm glad Dr. Quiros delineates and underscores these consequences. "Through books and research on social injustices and inequities, there have different ways of waging these struggle. The Human rights cases if civilians are hurt while the latter make a adherence to the case that no civilians and non-combatants get into the line of fire.

Still, the solutions he solicited as skilled penalty from some sources, of which there are aplenty in our land.

—ERNESTO S. HERRERA,
political prisoner,
Oriental Mindoro Provincial Jail,
Calapan City

Glan a peaceful town

I WISH to react to the front-page report, "Bolivia under siege of pirates RP leader" that was published in the Sept. 20 Inquirer issue.

Glan is not a municipality of South Cotabato but of Sarangani Province which was created by virtue of Republic Act 9228.

Secondly I beg to disagree that Glan serves as the training ground for the Jemaah Islamiyah and Rajah Solaiman Liberation Front and as a sanctuary for Muslim rebels. This is pure speculation, perhaps based on the fact that Glan has many converted migrants which are often used as points of entry by illegal immigrants.

Glan is inhabited by 74,000 peace-loving people.

History will records show that Glan was founded by 24 families from the Visayas and Luzon. The Muslim brothers from Jolo, Tawi-Tawi, Lanao and Malay Bonsuales, who landed on the coastal areas and navigators, were later.

Both Christians and Muslims concentrated on coconut farming as a source of livelihood, to build Glan because the No. 1 copra producing town in the country. It was in that year when thousands of Ilocanos allegedly migrated to Glan to look for greener pastures. There is a harmonious relationship between the Indigo, Christians and Muslim Filipinos of Glan. Give land country provide the Indigo with work, while the Indigo offer the landowners labor force. Filipinos and Indonesians have intermarried, making the two races closer.

Glan today is still a major coconut producing town. But it has no coconut factories. So coconuts harder are taken to Davao's thousand among its own farmers, the resourceful the people of Glan are living a contented life and could assume a very unlikely. Our Muslim brothers enjoy peace and economic stability and would not welcome the [illegible] and other Muslim rebels to the town. Several times in the past, Muslim rebels tried to take refuge in the Muslim communities of Glan but they were apprehended and driven away.

Lawless elements in Glan, especially those who are not from the place, are easily discovered and apprehended. The crime rate in Glan is minimal. Robberies crimes are very seldom. As landowners and businessmen, the people here live together as an atmosphere of peace. Mayor Sarong Tee is always keeps a watchful eye on lawless elements who would threaten the security of our municipality. The residents of Glan, regardless of color, tribe and belief are treated and shown equal respect and recognize the citizens of Glan as one of the most peaceful towns in Mindanao, if not in the Philippines.

To name a few.

—ROBERTO S. FORTES,
Municipal Mayor,
Public Info. Office,
Sarangani Province

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

Across the NATION

[illegible]
[illegible]

3,000 displaced in clan war, Army says

COTABATO CITY—Skirmishes involving paramilitary and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) forces have displaced some 3,000 people in Maguindanao since Nov. 3, according to Col. Jerry Jalandoni, chief of the 604th Army Brigade based in the province.

The fighting, which the MILF dismissed as rido (clan war), was taking its toll on the government's peace efforts in the separatist area, officials said.

The conflict started with the carnapping of sales (religious tithe) in residents of Mamasapano by MILF forces.

Jalandoni said MILF commander Umar Dumpas and his men finally held hostage (owing to debts) a pastor in Sitio Libutan, Barangay Tee, Mamasapano, on Nov. 3.

Some residents alleged that the MILF was not actually cooperative in returning peace after it issued statements dismissing Dumpas's offensives.

But MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu later told reporters that the rebel camp's capture of the pastor of every Muslim and "anybody who opposes it should, I think, [acknowledge] it is [subject] to even [giving] it a chance to even Muslim."

Dimaluluk Mlandal, a paramilitary commander in Mamasapano, and around 150 of Dumpas's men harassed his detachment early Thursday in Barangay Tuka, to prevent a group of harvesting residents fired by MILF forces in a nearby village.

One of the residents, Michael Usman, said they were taking an early morning Ramadan meal when artillery fired from the 105th MILF Brigade-renamed 62nd Mujahid Command (to connect men were now apparently keeping the hostages while harvesting their crops.

Late Saturday, Gov. Datu Andal Ampatuan Sr. appealed to MILF field commanders "to respect the ongoing peace process, obey their superiors, and give the people a respite in peaceful socio-economic in the name of the observance of fasting during the holy month."

Ampatuan said officials were alarmed after MILF chief negotiator Mohagher Iqbal's statement that the MILF did not recognize the implementation of the 1996 Republic Autonomous Mujahid Command (ARMM) as a foreign-imposed community.

MILF chair Murad Ebrahim said he had sought the help of Organization Mayor Datu Amin Midtimbang "to help negotiate for peaceful settlement with the parties involved in the rido."

But officials said they wanted to clarify reports pending to the skirmishes as resulting from rido: "There is no rido; there is only a threat in the conduct of the pastor's men as well as during the war season," a village official said. He is a man at a town health center where small children were being treated.

"The role of the story has hardly been recorded by the international [peace] monitoring team, because we don't have the capability to provide them updates or issue an incident like this happen," the official said, and to be identified to news reports for security reasons. Sarah R. Meadows, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Central Luzon inmates suffer from congestion

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Philippine National Police chief Director General Edgar Aglipay's policy of shooting every crime suspect has seen no let up. But breaking news to jails without incoming or outgoing detention facilities makes inmates suffer.

In Central Luzon's crowded jails, detainees cope with the cramped spaces by sleeping, standing and sitting in shifts, according to Senior Supt. Ebony Hamoyle, the regional chief of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology.

He said the region's 32 detention centers hold 5,225 prisoners.

The Angeles City jail was built for 500 people, but is now hosting at least 1,000, BJMP reports disclose.

The jail in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija has 200 inmates or so times the 20 people that it was designed to keep.

The number of inmates for detained or stopped in the cities of Tarlac, Cabanatuan in Nueva Ecija, and Malolos in Bulacan.

The current capacity, Hamoyle noted, has surpassed the standard set by the United Nations—one inmate for every square meter.

"So jails that are highly congested, the prisoners are really praying for us. They're taking shifts—standing, sitting and sleeping," Hamoyle said.

The BJMP manages five detention centers in Pampanga, 11 in Bataan, five in Nueva Ecija, three in Tarlac, four in Zambales, three in Aurora, and one each in Aurora and the cities of Olongapo and Angeles.

Most of the inmates have not been convicted. In most cases, women offenders are mixed in all-male cells, making their vulnerable to abusers, the Inquirer learned.

The jails, said Hamoyle, were historically small when there were half-several years ago.

He said the courts there not have accepting county inmate, only to each bonds, but only offenders who can pose and release cases are bailable, such as theft, larcenists in jail because they could not raise the money, he said.

Some were longer because their trials are delayed because judges handling them are burdened with cases.

Hamoyle said the BJMP had requested the population of inmates to double its request, and the Department of the Interior and Local Government, to which the BJMP is attached, had increased its budget for more jails. Rowell Hidalgo, PDI Central Luzon Desk

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Septic tank gas kills 3

[illegible] CITY—Three maintenance workers suffocated to death after inhaling poisonous gases inside the septic tank of the Shangri-La Mactan Island Resort in Lapulapu City.

The fatalities were identified as Rodolfo Legaspi, 20, and Manuel Candia, 27, both of Antipolo del Sur, and Milbert Bersano, 18, of Bohol.

They were employees of Cebu Hydro Tank Manual Services, which has been maintaining the septic tanks of the Shangri-La Mactan Island Resort for at least seven years.

Police investigators determined that the workers were cleaning the septic tank at about 4 p.m. on Saturday.

Police said they went down inside the tank to check why the drainage [illegible] was blocked. [illegible] to be removed by help, police said.

Legaspi and Bersano immediately followed him inside the tank, but they, too, were overcome. Antonio Napeñas, PDI Visayas Bureau

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Luisita strikers dispersed; 80 hurt

DAMAC CITY—At least 80 striking workers of Hacienda Luisita and their relatives, and some policemen were hurt after the military, police and the sugar estate's security personnel dispersed them on Saturday night and Sunday morning.

The injured, including women and children, were taken to various hospitals in this city with bruises and broken bones.

Reports said policemen and soldiers and bandmen, bolo pan and a water cannon to disperse the workers belonging to the striking United Luisita Workers' Union (ULWU) and the Central Azucarera de Tarlac Labor Union (Catlu).

At least 92 policemen and soldiers from the Army's 69th Infantry Battalion and 703rd Infantry Brigade combined off the area near the Central Azucarera de Tarlac (CAT) following the protest action staged by the farm workers and their families on Saturday noon.

Lt. Col. Perfecto Mesias, spokesperson of the 703rd Brigade Northern Luzon Command said the policemen initiated the confrontation when they started throwing rocks and tear gas at the policemen and soldiers.

"As far as I know, there were no civilian casualties. (The policemen) cannot retaliate and remain a classic situation," Mesias said.

The protesters barricaded all access points to the sugar mill or refinery, preventing sugar products from reaching the market.

They, he added, with at least 2,000 tons of sugarcane were also forced to stop delivery.

A statement from the CAT described the work stoppage at the sugar refinery mill as illegal. It said only a handful of workers joined the strike to cripple milling operations.

"It's a subtle act to win over support from its regular members and to intimidate to confuse the labor impact. It's intended to blackmail the CAT management to give in to their unreasonable demands," said Jose Bonifacio, CAT spokesperson and Hacienda Luisita Inc. (HLI) vice president for corporate affairs.

"The work stoppage was called without resorting to the usual procedures, making it illegal. Since it did not conform to the procedures, it was not sanctioned by their regular members. That's why it did not get any support from workers," Bonifacio said.

"After they did was to bring in plenty of outsiders to project support from its members," he said.

According to the union, they were armed with stones, Molotov cocktail bombs, tear gas and even guns, which only goes to show that they were the ones resorting to violence. But we are always open for peaceful negotiations," Bonifacio said.

Fr. Godofredo Ilan the strike was called by a handful of CAT workers against the CAT, which runs the sugar mill. It was not a strike against HLI, which operates the sugar farmland, he said.

Hacienda Luisita is owned and managed by the family of former President Corazon Cojuangco Aquino.

The series of strike filed by the ULWU and Catlu cited cases of illegal retrenchment, deadlock in the collective bargaining agreement (CBA), the Cojuangco family's alleged refusal to bargain and the limited man days (work days) given to the workers.

Rene Galang, Ulwu president, stated that the strike is staged to press "We are afraid that the troops sent here would start shooting, especially that many old men and elderly have joined the lawful order," Galang said.

Bonifacio Ricardo, CAT corporate affairs manager, said what happened was a "legitimate dispersal."

He said the CAT stopped operations starting Friday noon. He said that while the management could retain control among the Ulwu members due to a recent downsizing among their ranks, they were outgunned by the strike-staged by in their favor belonging to Catlu.

Last month, about 800 Ulwu members, including their president and many union officers, were retrenched.

The management said the retrenchment was prompted by losses due to falling sugar prices and the frequent rice hauling incidents inside the hacienda.

The workers were demanding the reinstatement of the retrenched workers and the start of the negotiations for their new CBA.

"It's all up to the Cojuangcos to resolve the issues. Our demands are legitimate, we are just asking for a small amount, if not we will stay here indefinitely," Galang said.

But Bonifacio said Galang was no longer president of the Ulwu and cannot negotiate for the workers.

Bonifacio said the Ulwu leaders somehow have a new representative to talk with the management for Dec. 15 CBA negotiations. Romulo Bituin, Jr. Dionisio and Russell Bruno. (PIA Central Luzon Desk)

Pearl farm operator sues militant groups

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—The operator of a pearl farm in southern Palawan sued Akbayan party-list Rep. Nina Nazarea-Bautista, a group of indigenous people, nongovernment organizations, some fishermen and several unnamed respondents for illegally disrupting the operations of the farm.

Aquafarm International Corp. (Aquafarm), operator of the more than 1,000-hectare pearl farm in Bahile, Bataraza, filed a civil case for injunction before the regional trial court here against the respondents for allegedly "violating the possessory rights" of the corporation.

On Oct. 17, in observance of World Food Day and the Indigenous Peoples Month, around 200 members of the Bantalanong mga Babaylan sa Dating Tribong ng Palawan (Babdtpal), accompanied by Task Force Bagtak and Bantay-Dagat, went to Bahile on board 72 pump boats to symbolically fish in the perimeter of the pearl farm.

The Rs farm long been clamoring for a modification of ancestral domain title over the waters where the farm has allegedly encroached.

They also wanted to talk with the pearl farm officers, but they were barred by policemen and farm guards.

Aquafarm, represented by Fortes and Bautista Law Offices, said in its petition that it had all the rights to protect the pearl farm as part of the 25-year lease agreement it entered into with the municipal government in 1998.

It is leasing the marine waters for P35 per hectare every year. Bahile's waters are around 971,000 a year.

It added that only before the contract was executed, fishermen had been operating in a marine sanctuary in Bahile since 1979.

At that time, only a few people were on the islands nearby so the Rs could not claim ownership over ancestral waters, it contended.

"Their entry as indigenous people in or about the marine areas, who were entitled to sanctuary and protection under the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act or any Philippine Law," the petition stated.

It said the respondent fishermen claiming to be Rs were just nuisances from Bahile, a town by water (public) and other provisions.

Sambilog, whose members are Pala'wans and Moslem Tribes, maintained that they have ancestral rights over the waters that Aquafarm has been occupying.

According to them, since the pearl farm operated in the area, it has closed the traditional navigational routes of the fishermen. They were prohibited to fish, even in waters near the pearl farm.

Chieftain Rodolfo Calo cited instances when fishermen's boats were fired upon and some of them were detained by the guards for going near the area.

Aside from the petition for injunction, the court issued a "72-hour temporary restraining order to prevent the respondents from entering the pearl farm's premises.

Statements have been served to the respondents but they have not yet answered the petition. Jamille Sevilla, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Roundup

Trader shot dead

SAN JUAN CITY—A businessman died and killed in front of his house in Barangay Balacan here Wednesday. Police said Ramon Cardenas, 45, was shooting that it and pass of their yard at the house in Village Subdivision at past noon when he was shot dead by a motorcycle-riding man. Victim, who sold fish from his home, died in a Caloocan hospital. The suspects, according to a police report, used a .45 cal. pistol in the attack. Anselmo Roque, PDI

Tricycle fares up

LUCENA CITY—Tricycle fare hiking negotiations commenced on this city and Quezon, Romper has requested an increase in tricycle fares in the first kilometer. Black Schools, Lawmen TRB Cabalo ac-

Unexplained funds

AGUINALDO, Quezon—Local officials here expressed apprehension on why no action longer got financial assistance from President Macapagal-Arroyo after the province lost some of its agricultural products to 471-million-grad typhoon. Mayor Reginaldo Ilagan said the Provincial Peace and Rehabilitation Council established here recently to require calamities projects funded through other grants. He said they could not account for the funds since it was the former mayor who handled them. Pablo C. Muller Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Waste disposal drive

LUCENA CITY—The city's Solid Waste Management Board will soon re-start your any household garbage and collection operations in accordance that will have the correct garbage disposal system. Based on provisions of the Solid Waste Management Act. Board officials called on all local authorities in their districts and help the city government in their endeavors. The workers will be chosen based on their capacity in segregating non-biodegradable and biodegradable wastes, maintaining their own residential areas healthy, and in the best performance of contracts. Pablo C. Muller Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Youth parliament

CITY OF LEGAZPI—Thirty young Bicolanos are sworn in as the Sangguniang Kabataan Parliament for 2004-05 in Legazpi City. Governor Joey Salceda, the parliament's mentor, said the youth leaders are expected to help in the implementation of the city's development plan. Malcolm Garcia, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Pupil dies in mishap

MANILA, Philippines—A primary student died after being run over by a jeepney in Pasay City on Monday morning. Police said Jeffrey Angel Antolino, 8, a student of the Villamor Air Base Elementary School, was crossing Taft Avenue when he was hit by a jeepney driven by Jun P. Vergara, 37, of 560 Zamora St., Sta. Mesa, Manila. Rhonda O. Pazzibugan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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Tiger in familiar spot

Roars to share of Tour Championship lead

ATLANTA—Tiger Woods put together his best consecutive rounds to score their four years. The result was a share of the 54-hole lead, a place it seems he hasn't been in forever.

Playing his best golf of the year in the season-ending Tour Championship, Woods tee off four straight birdies yesterday at East Lake for a 9-under 61, leaving him tied with 50-year-old Jay Haas.

Woods has won 30 of 32 events when he has had at least a share of the lead entering the final round.

The last time he held the 54-hole lead was last year at the American Express Championship just south of Munich. That was 19 strokes play from seven days, which also is the last time Woods won early in a week.

"I'm going to give it my best," Woods said.

Haas recovered from two early bogeys and shot 66, making a 6-shot par putt on the final hole to join Woods at 9-under 201.

Woods has seven 60 verses in his eight-plus years as a pro, including eight majors.

Haas has never won a PGA Tour event, but he has come close. He lost to Tiger 12 years ago in his rookie season at the 1992 Texas Open. He has been atop the leaderboard going into the final round only three times since then.

"I definitely won't be the favorite tomorrow," Haas said. "But what he does shouldn't affect what I do."

US Open champion Retief Goosen of South Africa also made four straight birdies playing with Woods and had the toughest lead until he finished seven par 3's in a row. Goosen (70) and Stephen Ames (70) of Trinidad and Tobago.

Vijay Singh's bid to finish the year with 10 victories—the most since Sam Snead won 11 times in 1950—ended with an indifferent round of 70. He was tied for 11th and four behind.

"We've got to be in contention to be 100 percent into it," Singh said. "I'm just not into it."

Woods got himself into the mix with his two lowest consecutive rounds (64-61) since he won the Canadian Open four years ago by closing with 64-62-64.

Woods' only bogey over the last two days was a three-putt from some 50 feet on the opening hole Saturday. But he Woods recovered with some clean shots and ninety putts—a 9-iron to 10 feet on No. 9 and an 11-foot putt on No. 9, followed by a couple of 30-footers down the slope that nickled into the cup on three last tell.

He suddenly looked like the Woods of old, pumping his fist, pointing at the cup when the ball disappeared.

Even a few friends.

But while a victory might take some of the sting out of a frustrating year, this might be one case where Woods could be the spoiler.

Haas has been one of the most outstanding players in golf the last two years. Despite being eligible for the Grand-over Champions Tour he has continued to tee it up against the best with strong results. He was the second oldest player to earn a spot in the Ryder Cup, and he became the oldest to qualify for the Tour Championship.

All he has to do now is take down the most formidable closer in golf for his first victory in more than a decade.

"It probably makes a little pressure off me," Haas said. "If I don't win, everybody will say 'Well, my goodness, he's up against one of the best players in the world and he's 50 years old,' and all that stuff. That's kind of disappointing myself if I think that way.

"I can do it. I've got to think that." AP

A DINCE familiar image that has nearly become redone—a fist-pumping Tiger Woods. REUTERS

Annika completes Mizuno four-peat with 9-stroke win

SORENSTAM

OTSU, Japan—World No. 1 Annika Sorenstam shot into the history books with a solid nine-stroke victory in the Mizuno Classic Saturday, becoming only the second player to win its LPGA event four years in a row.

The 34-year-old super Swede sank an eagle and five birdies in the final round after leading the three-round tournament wire-to-wire to end 194, 22 under par.

She becomes only the second woman after Laura Davies of Britain, who won the Standard Register (PAC) tournament from 1994-1997, to claim a "four-peat."

"It has been a wonderful week. I thought I played some great golf, so I am very happy to be the winner today," said Sorenstam after her 55th career win, the seventh this year.

She has already become the LPGA top prize-earner for the fourth straight year with two more events left to play.

South Korean Grace Park, the No. 2 LPGA prize money leader Sorenstam who won the CJ Wise Bridges Classic last week, was tied with Lorena Ochoa at -200 to finish second in the same $1-million tournament for the third straight year.

Park was caught up by a Bilyanois and Michie Ohba, both of whom surged ahead by firing a 69 in the final round to tie the course record on the par-72, 6,454-yard layout Saturday.

Sorenstam, after a 66 the on the short fifth hole, caught the green with a 233-yard second shot and rolled to an eight-foot eagle putt on the 460-yard sixth hole.

"I was very happy to get off to a nice start there and I felt confident," Sorenstam said after the win. "I played solid."

But, after her 68th birdie of the day on the 16th, she could not keep up the momentum to surpass her LPGA all-time record... she scored 194 birds to-par of 192 of 24 under par, she set here last year.

"At 17, I missed a four-footer and on 18, I missed a nine-footer. So I had a chance," she said. "It was unfortunate it did not go in. But three again, I made a lot of putts this week. I am very happy the way things turned out."

Davies, 43, was tied in 11th place at 206 with two other players.

Another Briton, Janice Moodie, fired a hole-to-one on the 149-yard ninth hole but ended up in a 30th place tie at 211. AFP

Alta Vista dominates Visayas leg

CEBU—Alta Vista Golf and Country Club's members were hailed a deserved stand by each of total leader Bridge Hollow to dominate the first phase of the 2004 Visa Taste Golf Tour's Visayas leg at their rolling home course here.

With just half of its units completing play, Alta Vista has emerged the presumed leader in the Tour, which has Globe Platinum as major sponsor, after pulling off a counter-bid sweep of all three divisions.

Spurred by a 36-point explosion in the first round by Ellen Johnstone, Alta Vista 2 took the thunder from its A Team with Edwin Espina and Jack Chin helping for a 2SH [109-94]=203 that consequently put them three points ahead of Alta Vista 1 (Rosario Ong, Leo Alvarez, Sidro Tirol).

The all-former Eagle Ridge quartet, which is in the forefront of the defending overall champion's campaign, finished the leg behind at 276.

Alta Vista 3 was a composite of Sydney Harris, Alejandro Dayot, Catalino Dagoo and Alejandro Garcia sustained the assault by topping an all-Japanese squad that time by seven points with its 249 aggregate.

Alta Vista 2's and 3's of Alta Vista completed the show of strength with a 1-2 placing in Divot Ong, Bacolod City and Georgie Tee landed 2/3 against the 200 of James Tolentino, Allan Lee, Jaime Tee and Selson Sarco.

The yours Tour is also supported by Samsung, Omega, Titleist, Bunjay Cobra as hole-in-one sponsors as well as Cebu Pacific, Tintuck, Bermudez, Metro Pole (Davao), Manila Tytex and Flo Bellevue Hotel (Manila), Philippine Airlines, Manila, Norfolk Express, Pinebrook Golfers Beef, Del Bell Bandera and San Miguel Corp.

HCMPA president Jose Vito B. Borromeo (clutch boy-left, standing) and tournament commissioner Jojo Rodriguez (in white shirt) with the Kaya and Pangarap team members during the opening of the Globe Handy Phone Super Cup football tournament Friday at the Manuela field.

Mendoza bucks spill, tops duathlon

CLARK FIELD, Pampanga—Defending champion Ryan Mendoza got up from a fall fall in the 30K run caused by another runner to win the national duathlon championship.

It was the third straight title for the 28-year-old Mendoza, who remains unbeaten in open pentagon duathlon events.

But he encountered trouble in the opening portion of the race, clashing participant representing Army transition zone but later, running him to fall.

"It hurt me in front of me and when I fell, he even looked at me before optimizing away. That fired me up," Mendoza said in Filipino after the race, which included a 2:03:14.

With his victory in the event hosted by the Mimosa Golf & Country Club and the Mimosa Villas inside the sprawling Clark Special Economic Zone, Mendoza will be representing the Philippines in the Asian Duathlon Championship in Bangkok next year.

TBAC president Jose Carrasco, Sen. Pia Cayetano, who ran in the event, and Mimosa Sales & Marketing manager Kristy Meneses awarded Mendoza his trophy.

Second place went to 29-year-old duathlon Jay-Ar Obial, a track team member from UP Diliman and a member of the national duathlon team.

"I always aim for the top when I join races but hurt them was just too strong. I am happy with the performance," said Obial who finished in 2:04:08, followed by Baguio-bet Jefferson Valdez, a former Navy campaigner who clocked 2:11:11.

In the women's division, Bulacan triathletes Gamor was likewise a runaway winner in 2:37:11 as she took the lead right from the start, electing to run with the male runners in the initial stage of the first 10Kruns.

Rose Lopez, a former national triathlete and cyclist, finished second in 2:46:08.

Tszyu keeps title via TKO

GLENDALE, Arizona—IBF junior welterweight champion Kostya Tszyu retained his title Saturday, demolishing Marcelino Mitchell in less than three rounds of the long-awaited rematch between the former bitterfoemen.

Tszyu (31-1) knocked Mitchell down four times—three in the third round.

The last time, the relentless Russian-born Australian dropped Mitchell in his known with two combinations, then a right hand, two lefts and a right before referee Raul Caiz stepped in at the 2:46 mark.

Tszyu was credited with a seven-round technical decision of Mitchell (31-4) when they fought on Feb. 3, 2001. But that was because Mitchell had to retire after reinjuring his left knee.

This time, Tszyu, a former champion of all three major divisions, left no question as he supremely, pitting his 20th knockout and repeating as 15-1 in world championship fights.

"I had a sword and some feeling last night that he was going to put on the performance of his life, and he surely did," Tszyu's promoter Vlad Warton said. AP

Mauresmo reaches Advanta final

VILLANOVA, Pennsylvania—Top-seeded Amelie Mauresmo of France advanced to the Advanta Championships final after topping Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova of Russia withdrew from their semifinal match with a strained right shoulder.

Sharapova will take on ninth-seeded Dinara Safina next Saturday after defeated seventh-seeded countrywoman Nadia Petrova, 6-0, 7-6 (2), later Saturday. AP

Supreme Court abhors intrusion into sports disputes

THE COURT never liked by embattled foreign-born players, particularly Asi Taulava of Talk 'N Text, against the Philippines Basketball Association should not have happened. In my opinion, the problem should have been resolved at the office of the PBA commissioner and not before the side of a judge.

As a matter of fact, the Supreme Court does not encourage the intrusion of the courts into sports disputes saying, "If legal matters come allowed to intrude [into] every involve the enforcement of rules of private [or even public] sporting events, there will be no end to litigation, for each team, or individual every decision by an umpire, referee or sporting judge could be subject to question. Sportsmen will have to wait for the result of sporting events, not from the referee, or from media, but from an interminable trials by jury. Sporting [contest presumed reading should legal-third story."

The high court also noted that encouraging the trend [of filing court suits] would ultimately prevent sporting events, adding that unless a clear case is found for arbitrary applications of sports rules by officials, it is best for courts to prudently leave things where they are. The Supreme Court reached this landmark decision way back in 1980 when the Philippine Basketball Association, which branded as its president, faced a damage suit because [disqualified a player from an top competition because the latter became his violation of a rule.

The court also said the circuitous route the case has taken [it took 13 long years] would have been unnecessary had commonsensical decision-making rules of sportsmanship and fair play. Those who penned the landmark decision were Associate Justices Santiago M. Kapunan, Teodoro R. Padilla, Jose N. Melencio, Regino C. Hermosisima and Hilario G. Davide Jr., who is now the Chief Justice. Ponente was Associate Justice Isagani Cruz of the Philippine Sun Star Daily Inc.

In the case of Taulava, Judge Rogelio Vinarao, presiding judge of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 222, recently denied a temporary restraining order sought by the TNT import player against an earlier decision by the PBA to suspend him as a ruler Filipino-based on a Department of Justice ruling.

Pinaren said Taulava came to court with another lawsuit and is therefore not entitled to injunctive relief. "Pursuant to his Unilateral Player's Contract, the petitioner (Taulava) is bound by the constitution of the PBA and should therefore respect and abide by the decisions of the PBA Board of Governors."

PBA Commissioner Noli Eala said he suspended Taulava based on the findings of the Department of Justice that the Foreign Inset Act was included to the list of six foreign-born players who were recently accorded for nationality dispensation after they were found by an earlier investigation conducted by the Senate to have acquired Philippine citizenship through fraudulent means.

"I feel vindicated," said Eala. "The decision is an affirmation that the PBA is autonomous in terms of implementing league rules, player conduct and eligibility."

...

SPORTS LAW UPDATE TO SHANG. Regional of Daing Negotiations, the only four time winner of the coveted Bowling World Cup. He was recently named the world's No. 1 player by the bowler's Journal International in its cover story titled "World's Greatest Bowlers" in its September 2004 issue. The Asia-Europe Bowling editor and publisher Mel Luby Jr., also named a Bowling Owners Team hosted by Daing and four other former world champions, namely Andres Monarelli of Venezuela, Mike Entwistle of Finland and Sweden's Mats Enmann and Tomas Leandersson.

Still, Daing Pinang boomer his rematch any regrets will remain largely unswung. Hailed by the country's one-and-only sports law, Republic Act 9064, which grants benefits only to sports achievers in the Olympics, Asian Games and other sanctioned World Championships with a multi-award's amounting to as much as P5 million. There is something wrong with RA 9064. The law, authored by then Representative Manjo Mendoza and Cabecto District but reelected by former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, is discriminatory and unfair to Pinang. It should be amended to include achievers not only in bowling, but also in other non-Olympic sports like billiards, chess and golf, which are either held annually or every two years. Our billiard, chess and golf athletes deserve second Rep. Rizalito Pantoveda, could use his clout and influence in helping solve this nagging problem of discriminative sports.

Reforestation of Pampanga River Basin starts

By Tamara Ovejia
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—62 hectares is to green the forests of the Pampanga River Basin, the basin's largest flood de-ntange area in the country, here finally takes off.

The recently-completed Pampanga River Basin watershed management plan is, by far, touted to be the most comprehensive approach to many problems in Central Luzon.

It seeks to ensure hydroelectric power to the Luzon grid; irrigation to 360,246 hectares of farmg; water to industrial and commercial firms and almost six million people in Central Luzon and Metro Manila; and save floods in Central Luzon, a copy of the summary of the study obtained by the Inquirer showed.

The plan's four components—reforestation, erosion control, flood protection and maintenance, and infrastructures that are to be undertaken in six years—are worth P4.9 billion.

The amount is 75 percent of what the government has hoped to build the 56-km FPR Megadike, Pampanga's last defense against Mt. Pinatubo's lahar. It is nearly the same amount of what the Department of Public Works and Highways is spending for flood-control projects this year here to P92,89-billion budget.

The Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), the Philippines' biggest source of official development assistance, has been tapped to support the watershed rehabilitation plan.

"(The plan is) necessary for the sustainable development of two crucial regions," said Rogelio de Leon, regional executive director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The basin covers 799,557 ha in Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga and Nueva Ecija, the provinces on which the more than 200-km Pampanga River, the drainage of 30 river systems, passes through. At least 498,389 ha in the basin are prime lands. The rest (292,307 ha) comprised the forests.

According to the latest inventory only 24 percent or 71,431 ha in the basin remained forested.

"Par- es large an area a supported only by a small forest spells threats to the survival and development of 3.7 million people [in 16 towns and seven cities in the four Central Luzon provinces]," De Leon said.

Pampanga and Bulacan, he said, are in higher risk because while their total basin area is smaller, they are at the downstream of the rivers and thus are more prone to floods of larger magnitudes.

The MNR has seven understudy massive reforestation projects in recent decades. The ministration that a bad-done area to create 19 ha of forest lands in selected dis-tricts, De Leon said.

That rate, he said, had been unable to catch up with the re-sent that illegal loggers were destroying the forest. Media mentions ranges at 50,000 to 200,000 board feet to one hour in General Tinio, Nueva Ecija alone.

Information weeks have been commissioned in Pantabangan and Carranglan in Nueva Ecija, the headwaters of the Pampanga River.

The Pantabangan River is basin in Ecija and the major lines in the basin feed 110 and 200 megawatts of power, respectively, to the Luzon grid, the study showed.

The government's response to floods in Central Luzon had largely been infrastructure-oriented, and zoned by only through dwelling.

But floods and forests "go hand in hand," De Leon said.

He said certain rate every after strong rainfall had stood in a mini-mum average of 2.16 billion cubic meters since 1972, because the forests have been eaten and from rain-am-400 to-rain zones and held soil.

The floods in the lowlands, on the other hand, were recorded at between 0.1 and 2.4 meters deep in areas 30 meters above sea level like Pampanga and Bulacan.

De Leon said their target is to plant 52.8 million of seedlings to maintain and protect the basin's entire forestlands.

Aside from 2003's support, the JBIC is tapping funds from the national budget, power generation and irrigation fees and local government units share in environmental protection.

NO HOLIDAY
At life per hardier such day, this fisherman from Sitio Tarabanan, Barangay Concepcion, Puerto Princesa City could not afford to have a vacation.

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MVP MOVES

Tolomia sparks Welcoat's surge

By Jasmine W. Payo

IT'S NEVER easy to lift a team that seemed bound for the basement.

But the Welcoat Paint Masters, runners-up last conference, felt relieved when veteran Chester Tolomia finally led the charge in their two-game turnaround in the PBL Open Championship.

After a worrisome 0-2 record, Welcoat racked up back-to-back victories behind Tolomia's double-digit performances.

The 6-foot-2 swingman, who played two years for Ginebra (2002-2003) in the PBA, keyed Welcoat's notable comeback and earned Player of the Week honors from the PBL Press Corps.

"Everything I ask him to do, he does. With his performance, hopefully our streak will continue," said Welcoat coach Caloy Garcia.

The 24-year-old Tolomia finished with 19 points in Welcoat's thrilling 80-79 double overtime win against defending champion Magnolia-FEU last Tuesday.

TOLOMIA: Hero

Four days later, the 2001 Most Valuable Player topscored with 20 points as Welcoat crushed ICTSI-La Salle, 69-51.

But more admirable, Tolomia recognized the turnaround as a team effort. "We won the last two games because of our teamwork," said the eager from Zamboanga City.

Tolomia added that the rapport among his teammates was a big factor. "The team is communicating better and everyone is helping each other. Right now, my teammates listen to me and I also listen to them," he said.

Founders golf field gets seven chances to drive home a BMW

PARTICIPANTS in the eighth Founders Golf Invitational of The Orchard Golf and Country Club on Nov. 11-13 will get seven chances to score an ace and drive home a BMW 316i sedan.

The hole-in-one prize is sponsored by BMW-PGA Cars and Prudential Guarantee Insurance. The field of 300 member-guest teams take a crack at it on seven of the eight par three holes on both the Palmer and Player courses.

Entries will also have a shot at other exciting prizes like round-trip tickets courtesy of China Airlines and Asiana Airlines, and an EZ-Go electric golf cart from Pinnacle Distributors for an ace on the short Palmer hole No. 12.

Orchard general manager Rene Garrovillo said everything is set for the Founders Invitational which counts TaylorMade-adidas, Globe Platinum, Sta. Elena Properties and Sta. Lucia Realty as major sponsors. Premium hole sponsor is Security Diners International.

Part of the festivities are cocktails on Thursday and Friday at the Benitez Hall where attractive raffle prizes are at stake, including Sony flat TVs, for walk-in Founders participants.

Club chair Vicente Santos and president Conrad Benitez head the banner field which also includes a group of low-handicappers.

They are defending low gross champion Dan Salvador and Bob Horan, Paul Salvador who is paired with Raymund Sangil, Ring Stehmeier who has Seve Rosas-Chua as partner and Poule Tugade who is playing with Eric Gaco.

Players will also be given the opportunity to test the GPS (global positioning system) unit, a satellite-aided distance measuring device.

The hole sponsors: Alcor Trading, Amuman Enterprises, Baron Travel, Beneficial Life-PNB, ChinaTrust Bank, Citibank, Design Packaging Industries, Emirates Security and Maintenance, Equitable Card Center, Equitable-PCIBank, Exotic Gardens, Gainers Marketing, GRM International, HBW Enterprises, Industrial Waste Systems, Las Piñas Golfers, Municipality of Imus, OSIM Phils., Palmoff, Pepsico International, RFM Corp, Sanitay Care Products Asia, Schering Plough, S R C, The Balkanup Manila, The Turf Company, Trans Global Consolidators, and YKK Phils.

Pinoy still hostage in Iraq

From page A1

group demanding a UN pullout from Afghanistan and the release of Taliban prisoners in return for the hostages.

The United Nations expressed growing concern for the well-being of the three election workers and appealed, along with President Hamid Karzai, for their release.

Dalia Mounir, a purported wife of Sabbagh, said the Iraqi government spokesperson, said the militant spokesperson, said the militant group demanded the release of Taliban prisoners in return for the hostages.

The United Nations expressed growing concern for the well-being of the three election workers and appealed, along with President Hamid Karzai, for their release.

Dalia Mounir, a purported wife of Sabbagh

Provincial buses banned from Edsa's yellow lane

By Margaux C. Ortiz

NO MORE jockeys on Edsa.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority yesterday told provincial bus drivers and operators that they were no longer allowed to pick up and unload passengers along Edsa.

MMDA officials said that, beginning this week, provincial buses would be restricted to Edsa's third lane and would no longer be allowed to enter the yellow lane for public utility vehicles.

"The provincial bus operators themselves requested that they be given loads after their time because their drivers complained of being delayed in the yellow lane's loading and unloading zones," MMDA Traffic Operations Center Executive Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said.

Vergel de Dios added that the provincial buses need to be grouped with the other city buses in the yellow lane.

Terminal ride

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando, who met with bus operators last week, said passengers would have to go to provincial bus terminals to get a ride.

"Now that these buses are confined in the third lane, there would be no more excuse for these provincial buses to load and unload outside terminals," Fernando said in his weekly radio program yesterday.

Vergel de Dios said erring provincial bus drivers would be fined P500 per offense for violating the yellow lane rule.

The MMDA officials also reminded provincial bus drivers to strictly follow the "none in, none out policy" about parking in their terminals along Edsa.

Fernando said drivers who refuse to follow the policy cause heavy traffic in the main thoroughfare.

"If they still refuse to abide by the rules, we would be forced to deny those who refuse entrance," Fernando warned.

Young man shot and killed over cell phone in robbery

By Ruth L. Navarro

ANOTHER young life snuffed out by cellular phone robbers.

Twenty-two year old Jerry Lacson fell a fatal victim to a group ahead of his friends as he could go home early.

However, he never made it alive home to Barangay Old Zaniga, Mandaluyong City.

His friends, who came from the same party, found him hours later lying unconscious on San Rafael Street, Barangay Plainview, Mandaluyong City, at 5:15 a.m. yesterday.

Lacson's Nokia 3650 cell phone was missing, according to PO3 Fernando Agudon.

The friends asked for help from residents, who also called the police.

Dead on arrival

Lacson was then rushed to the Mandaluyong Medical Center but was pronounced dead on arrival.

Medical's gunshot wound victim eight chest and injuries on his face.

The police recovered a spent shell of a .45-cal. bullet from the crime scene, but there were no witnesses to give information on what had happened.

Meanwhile, another 22-year-old student was held up on Malaya corner Lapeña Streets in Barangay Plainview.

Police said a bewildered-eyed Shaun Ignito pulled over beside 4th Batt Drive At noon at about 3 a.m.

Four assailants had were got out of the car and took his Nokia 6230 cell phone. One of the suspects drank Nokia Senate on the head with a gun before fleeing.

The Mandaluyong police are looking into the possibility that the two incidents are connected.

PO1 John Brad Solente said they have had previous robberies wherein the suspects reportedly used a gold Nissan Sentra.

Authorities believe stolen cell phones and spurious cellphone stores in malls

FF Cruz bids for MRT-3 extension

By Gleviras S. Bodino

THE GROUP of FF Cruz & Co., one of the country's largest construction firms, has proposed to complete the metro railway loop by linking MRT-3 and LRT-1 for P250 million.

Roberto Lastimoso, general manager of the Metro Rail Transit Line 3, said an FF Cruz subsidiary, FE Systems Corp., had submitted a proposal to the transportation department.

But the DOTC, he said, would have to wait for the final justice department opinion on whether to allow Metro Rail Transit Corp. to do the extension as originally cast to smartpropositions.

MRTC chair Robert John Sobrepeña said the group was ready to start anytime the construction of the extension for only $191 million. Lastimoso said the FF Cruz group had a different design for the project, which could be the reason why the bid was higher.

Essential link

The much-delayed project spanning 5.12 kilometers to link Line 1 of the Light Rail Transit and MRT-3 is essential to complete the metro railway loop. It would allow commuters to travel and allow them to move from one line to another with greater ease.

LRT-2, which runs from Santolan to Pasig to Recto in Manila, would be connected to LRT-1 by December through the Doroteo Jose station. LRT-2 connects with MRT-3 through the Recto-Cubao station.

Close to 800,000 commuters use the three railway systems each day and of these, 400,000 board the MRT-3. The completion of the loop is seen to increase ridership even more.

Malacañang has declared the extension of MRT-3 to LRT-1 as one of the administration's priority projects.

President Macapagal-Arroyo gave the go-ahead for the construction of the MRT-3 extension more than two years ago. But the issue as to whether MRTC should do it or have another group undertake the extension has delayed the project.

SPORTS

Buenavista, Manipol top Yakult 10-M

'Vertek' outkicks Herrera to rule men's race

OLYMPIAN Edwardo Buenavista and International Queens of the Road Mercedes Manipol kept their local winning streak alive yesterday by sailing the 16th edition of the Yakult 10-Miler in the UP Complex ground.

Buenavista and Manipol, who were both crowned King and Queen of the Road in Taguig last month, found little resistance in riding the 20-kilometer race to clinch the top P5,000 cash prize in their respective divisions.

Buenavista broke away at the 4-km mark and refused to let the finish line settle a time of 1:11 minutes and 33 seconds.

National trackers Nesa Herrera tried to catch the Philippine marathon record holder but fell 40 seconds short.

Buenavista, known in the running circuit as "Vertek," also holds the event's record of 61 minutes flat. The three-time winner also ruled the Pedro Hill Marathon two weeks ago and is slated to run in the 10-K event of the Milo Marathon next week and in the Twin City run in Cotabato on Dec. 26.

Playing field was 22-year-old Rio delLeon (1:13:42) who outsprayed veteran Reynaldo Alvis Bayar (1:14:49) in the final 500 meters.

Unlike Buenavista, whom first 4:00 in the 5-km 10-kilometer was a record-breaking one, Manipol's debut was something she would rather forget.

"I didn't think my first race in 2000 because I was not familiar with the distance," said the 24-year-old Manipol in Filipino. "This time I trained for the event because I wanted to win."

Manipol, also a 10-K runner in the morning Milo Marathon, prevailed this time in one hour, one minute and 44 seconds, beating Jill Arsenault's marathon record holder Grizaldi Montes (1:02:27) and last year's champion Hazel Hadjandra (1:06:42).

Lilia Delfin (1:09:20) and Hilda Bip (1:09:36) were fourth and fifth, respectively.

Melinda Jane Ty Sua and Michael Ong of Yakult Phils. employees donated Body Bucks funded out the trophies and plaques to the winners.

The Top Gun Builders in the 5-K fun run were Antonio Barredo (15:08), Geovanni Quiatchon (16:15) and Ricardo Lozano (16:37) in the men's division, and Gina Tambien (19:11), Genevieve Ando Dela (22:49) and Mona Chiasco (24:47) in the women's race.

The Kalidad 3K winners were Kenneth Lagbo (14:01) and Ben Pen (16:16) in the 6-9 age group and Angie Mangao (22:47) and Gemie Ortello (14:53) in the 10-13 category.

Moab blasts rivals with sizzling pace

By Edwin Villanueva, Contributor

MOAB was like the massive beast she was named after yesterday blasting the opposition with a blistering run in the P1-million Sangguniang Stakes at the San Lazaro Leisure Park.

Brilliantly guided by Jessy Guce, the 3-year-old daughter of Rubiano exploded to the lead in the first bend and never wavered, hitting the pay-off line a full length ahead of top pick Desideratus.

The win, a follow-up to Moab's second-place feat in the Philippine Cup Old Pillars recently, was worth P600,000 for owner Dennis Figueroa, who named the Pacers-Lovett galloper after the US military's biggest bomb in its arsenal called MOAB or "Mother of All Bombs."

"Super ang result ko against the like of top fashhorse race horse dominica (The race superbly take-charge left to Dalikit throughout the race)," said Guce, who was tapped by Figueroa to skipper Moab over the Dilmaca, last pointer in the 1900 contest.

Now away only as a last hassle in the betting, Moab handily dispatched Desideratus Gil and played catch-me-if-you-can Jet Defenders Blade in let loose Dandaneco early, leaving danger from the duo-favored Rapacity last bend by MMRO chief Pastel Dejan.

Moab left the home base with a three-length gap on Desideratus and used that edge to outlast the latter's belated bid in the long 1,900-meter route. Dandaneco settled for P210,000.

Coney Girl was never in contention and crossed up third, five lengths off the victor. Belvidere, the morning-line top of Moab, entered fourth, followed by I Love This Game, Successful Dream and Brooke Girl.

Winner trainer Jaime "Hak" Antonio, representing Figueroa, received the winner's check and trophy from Philippine Racing Commission (Philracom) chair Jimmy Celeste, who was honored in the Legend Cup.

It was another victorious day for Figueroa, the renowned Filipino-Indonesian businessman, as another Pinto prospect, Belgian Inspirator, captured the Champions Juvenile Cup, also with Guce aboard.

Belgian Inspirator, a 4-year-old bay colt sired out of Mythical Imp, defeated by a smug Lucenzi Hall at the 1,300 meter mark and coasted to a two-length victory over Sauvages Force in the 1,500 meter race.

Blinds, also the runner-up in the Governor's Cup of the recent Triple Crowns, stroked 2-0-0-3 (19-2-1-3, 25-5-25-10-71). Belgian Inspirator raced 3-1-1-3 (14-25-26-3-28).

In the day's other encounters, Jimdo Mercado's Crystal City chose to the Empire Ice Cup under Dilema, bridled Lakel Ilio Legend Cup with Mercado Empire on top, Tinoblas, ridden by Louie Bolleza, chased the Marino Cup and Bathing Imperial, handled by Bodo, prevailed in the Sweepstakes.

Hernando, who turns 69 on Dec. 26, was honored for his outstanding contribution to Philippine racing.

"We admire the man who has been a pillar of local racing since the 1950s. That's why he's up to old," said Dilag, relating the well-respected fan-cum-horseman.

TRUCKS & HEAVY EQUIPMENT

Kuter of the Year

Marino Quidicoli, the 15-year-old top driver of the Cebu Racing Group, clinches karting's biggest plum after the concluding races of the 2004 PCSO-Shell Sportscarving Series at the Carnival Circuit Phils. recently. The son of a Cebuano resident and an Italian father became the first karter to win more titles in one season—the grassroots Open class and the Rotax Max junior series.

Kaya blanks Pasargad

MUNTINLUPA—Kaya FC got off to an impressive start in the Globe Handy Phone Super Cup football tournament Friday by blanking Pasargad, 3-0, at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

Freddie Gonzales, a former national team player who also plays for a professional team in Vietnam, sparked the one-sided outing in Division 1 of the 22-team event with goals in the 43rd and 56th minutes.

Rudy del Rosario knocked in the other Kaya marker in the 72nd minute to build the winning margin.

UST toppled Tom Boy-Olivelle FC, 4-2, in another Division 1 contest which kicked off the first tournament under Jose Vibal Investments. The new president of organizing MOBA, Montreal Capital Region Football Association.

Reinforcements made their retirement of kick, assisted by tournament commissioner Jojo Rodrigues.

Defending champion Navy, which drew a bye, is in Group B, while last year's runner-up, Air Force, is knocked in A with Kaya, Tom Boy-Olivelle, Intercard and UST.

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Past-due credit card debts surge to P14B

By Doris C. Dumlao

PAST-DUE credit card receivables of Philippine banks surged by 62.6 percent to P14 billion as of end-June from P8.6 billion a year ago, reflecting aggressive lending but constraining collection steps.

Bankers said the high risk of credit card repayment killing pain due to the country was the major reason why interest rates charged on the unsecured consumer lending were high, exceeding 3 percent a month.

But the BSP report also showed that credit card lending remained a small fraction of the banking system's total loan portfolio, amounting to only 3.5 percent as of end-June this year.

As a ratio of the banking system's non-performing loans, past-due credit card receivables stood at 6.8 percent, up from 2.9 percent a year ago.

The banking system's total credit card receivables inclusive of credit card subsidiaries amounted to P69.7 billion, up by 20.2 percent from a year ago.

Banks in universal and commercial banks accounted for 96.3 per cent of total credit card lending or P29.9 billion worth of receivables.

Local commercial banks accounted for P25.5 billion or 86 per cent of total while thrift banks held a P4.3 billion or 14.6 percent share.

Overall, aggressive credit card lending took its heaviest toll on universal and commercial banks, whose combined past-due receivables amounted to P13.46 billion or 97 percent higher than the level of a year ago. The sector's past-due ratio as of end-June stood at 10.40 percent, up from 27.68 percent a year ago.

The past-due credit card receivables of thrift banks, on the other hand, soars eased by 4.76 percent to P524 million from a year ago. Their past-due ratio also eased to 33.41 percent as of end-June from 34.05 percent a year ago.

On a quarterly basis, there was an overall improvement in the banks' credit card receivables.

"This developed as the 1.4-per cent growth in total credit card receivables outpaced the 1.6-per cent rise in past due receivables," the BSP said.

With the rising past due exposure linked to the cutthroat competition in the credit card business, the BSP's policy-making Monetary Board earlier issued a circular requiring a stronger risk management system for the credit card operations of banks and their subsidiaries. Banks were also required to set aside full provisions or write off loans that had gone past due by 181 days or more.

But aware that some banks resort to drastic measures to improve collection, the Monetary Board likewise issued another circular to address snowballing complaints about "undue" collection practices.

In the circular, the BSP ordered all banks, their subsidiaries or affiliate credit card companies and collection agents to watch on "reasonable" and "legally permissible" means to collect and refrain from "unscrupulous" acts.

Among the acts prohibited by the BSP were:

- the use or threat of violence or other criminal means to harm the physical person, reputation, or property of any person;
- the use of obscenities, insults, or profane language which amount to a criminal act or of

(CONTINUED ON A2)

2 foreign firms wooed to join Slex rehab

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SUPERFUEL Corporation Inc. (SCI) is pursuing talks with two possible foreign partners to get the P10-billion South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) rehabilitation project going.

SCI president Joel Roberto told the Business that the SCI board had agreed to pursue negotiations with MTD Capital of Malaysia and Group Epic of Panama to invest in the project.

MTD is the second biggest toll expressway operator in Malaysia while Epic is a leading Panama holding company.

The proposed funding for the project will require an equity infusion of roughly 30 percent or P3 billion from Superfuel, and its possible partners. The balance of approximately P7 billion may be funded through debt.

SCI is in the process of securing approval from the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority for a supplemental toll operations agreement for its 3.5-mile to operate the SLEX to Subic.

SCI is the joint-venture partner of Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC) in South Luzon Tollway Corp., the entity formed to undertake the rehabilitation, expanding and extension of the SLEX project.

The project involves extending the Alabang viaduct to the Tolmac in Batangas. The project is expected to be completed in three to four years.

Roberto also clarified issues over the ownership of SCI. This was after investor Berkowitz Oyson Equities Inc. (OEI) wrote that it had cornered an agreement to sell its 90 percent stake in SCI to real estate developer Northstar Development and Acquisition Corp. (NDAC).

Roberto and NDAC had been complaining with payment terms under a memorandum of agreement inked with OEI last February.

OEI had said it has terminated the agreement to sell its controlling interest in SCI to NDAC after NDAC failed to fulfill the payment terms of the sale under an MOA.

The MOA effectively transfers 90 percent of SCI held by OEI to NDAC. NDAC has been operating for the past 10 years and owns the Cordoville Sports Club in Quezon City.

WATER-FED ENGINE!
Filipino inventor Elmo Castillo collects hydrogen from his portable reactor, connected to a 12-volt car battery. The reactor, powered by a minimal voltage, separates enough hydrogen from water to run a car engine.

Sin upon sin

MUCH has already been said and written about the recently passed House version of the so-called sin taxes bill. But this measure is such a fitting test of our country's ability to deal with the current fiscal crisis that it deserves continued close attention, as the bill now nears one or the former to shape the final configuration of this critical revenue measure.

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Including the fiscal crisis to be over is a bit dangerous on a issue where we have barely scratched the surface of value needs to be done to bring the government finances to order, much less navigate an solid footing for the years ahead. Protecting confidence in the economy in good, but harming complacency when so much remains to be done can easily

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undo the undoubtedly gains we have made in addressing the crisis so far. I do recognize the difficulty of the balancing act the President and her economic managers must eventually perform in managing people's expectations as the economy find it do and signs that we have already achieved a sustainable macroeconomic in responding to the fiscal crisis, enough to celebrate it over. The pot on the back the President is giving out congressmen is somewhat premature, she should have given them her familiar tongue-lashing instead.

Pulling the revenue test

The current measure is still not become the eventual outcome will tell can and all whether Congress is open the shenanigans of pulling strife political expedients of short-sighted for the sake of the common good. The House version of the bill most strong doubt that is the case.

Former Finance Undersecretary Wilfredo ("Buwi") Enerson points out in a recent paper that among other things, the bill essentially fails the revenue test. By limiting the sin-type excises to the excise taxes on tobacco and alcoholic beverages to 20 percent rather than the 30 percent sought by the Department of Finance (DOF), the bill falls far short of raising the additional revenues targeted by the government for the measure. And it fails to even totally restore the lost revenue in the 1997 measure that led to the tremendous erosion in revenues from these products over the last seven years. Moreover, the revised schedules in this subsequent four years of 5 percent each falls far short of the superior rollout rate which has reached 7.7 percent, which means the revenues from the sin will continue eroding in real terms.

The equity test

Boni Recto's Senate count to soothe failure of the House bill, which is the equity test. It continues to have certain those in the area tax rates have differentiated across different price categories of cigarettes – which basically translates to those using certain brands sold by particular companies. Thus, the House bill perpetuates inequity in the administration of like or similar products. This is not going into the theoretical details of Professor Wayne Mayo-Anda to refer even to domestic Philippine law days ago), the bill accomplishes the by basing the differential tax rates on cigarettes on the basis of October 1996 prices compared to the flawed 1997 law. But prices have since to fall for many of these brands.

Mr Garcia observes that the very defi-

(CONTINUED ON B2)

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The 18-minute war

THE ROW between GMA Channel 7 and the Philippine Association of National Advertisers over the issue of advertising overload has escalated, with GMA-7 now telling the ad industry it "will have to bump off some advertisers" who disagree with the station's cost-ad load policy.

ERMA-7 warned the wavering camp Pana's latest directive on the advertising agencies and their clients to include a provision in every telecast order for their respective TV commercials that such a placement is "nonnegotiable on the commercial being aired within the 18-minute commercial load per program/hour."

"Otherwise, device our continuance [of the three provisions added.

The ad industry directive, sent out last month by Pana president Raul Alarcon, prompted an immediate circular from GMA marketing and productions president Manuel Quiogue.

Quiogue said the TV station will have no choice but to follow any advertiser's directive if such provision is inserted in its telecast order, especially if GMA-7 has more than 18 minutes of ad spots lined up for a particular program.

"In such a case, the station may have to establish priorities in accepting telecast orders, possibly on the basis of the rates of each client, or giving priorities to clients who do not include this provision, or other priority guide.

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BSP okays Banco de Oro stock plan

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has approved a strategy by publicly listed Banco de Oro Universal Bank, the banking arm of real magnate Henry Sy, to boost its shares trading by allowing foreigners to buy an additional 22 percent stake.

In an interview, BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said the policy-making Monetary Board had approved a plan to establish a domestic holding company, which would be 60 percent owned by the SM group through SM Investments Corp., and 40 percent by existing minority foreign investor Cambridge Pacific Fund Ltd.

The transfer of the BDO shares held by foreign fund Cambridge into the holding company will reduce direct foreign shareholdings in BDO from 22 percent to 18 percent.

"This will free up or make available to foreign investors some 22 percent more, which will be sold to the public through a secondary offering probably within the month," Reyes said.

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BSP okays Banco de Oro stock plan

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The shares to be installed to the new holding company shall consist of about 166 million shares of BDC and 133 million shares of Equitable.

The secondary offering would allow BDO to offer as much as 170 million shares held by existing shareholders to new foreign investors, Reyes said.

"This will stimulate demand and increase the trading of BDO shares," Reyes added.

In a separate disclosure, BDO spokesperson Elmer Serrano said the SM group was planning to sell about 1.66 billion of its own shares. The kind of buying rate and price would depend on market demand, he said.

"The proposed offer would also aim to diversify the share ownership of BDO to include more institutional investors and to increase its standing in the international capital markets," Serrano said.

Following the proposed offer, the SM group would continue to retain a significant shareholdings in BDO and BDO would continue to be an integral part of the SM group," he added.

BDO has appointed Macquarie Securities as the sole lead manager, global coordinator and bookrunner for the offering.

"The SM group is proposing to conduct this placement of shares to increase the free float of BDO and enhance its share trading liquidity, which would benefit all of BDO's shareholders," Serrano said.

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Cocktales

From page B1

time," he warned.

Pena has been at loggerheads with GMA ever since the TV station broke away in September 2003 from the industry-agreed 14-minute ceiling.

Pena has called GMA-7, as the very least, to observe the status quo until this month, when a new study on TV ad "clutter" shall have been concluded.

But the franchise-renewal was rejected outright by GMA-7.

Dotayque argued that DBM-7 had not been clear in exceeding the 16-minute rule, that different countries have different load limits, and that the United States has imposed absolutely no limit at all since any industry-imposed limit would constitute "restraint of trade."

"If nations should have the right to impose its own limits and conduct its business accordingly as long as it delivers the audience its clients are looking for," he said.

Channel 5 favors Cabao

ABC Channel 5 has found a new home for its revitalized news and public affairs department, in the 20-controlled Angelo Park Tower condominium near the corner of Edsa and E'Zamon Avenue.

According to the grapevine, ABC 5 is now preparing to move the news gathering team, now based on the geographically unthinkable Novaliches, to the Cubao location as early as the first quarter of 2005.

It is not immediately clear why ABC 5 chose the Angelo, except possibly for its antenna ideal height, since the residential condo-and-designed building is not purpose-built for a 24/7 operation like broadcast news, its driveway extends offering parking for only about half a dozen vehicles.

Philippines taxes Hillary

NEW York Sen. Hillary Clinton is leading a United Hill move to dun the Philippines for alleged $21 million in unpaid property taxes to New York City.

The Philippines was one of the seven countries named in a recent Daily News report as owing the Big Apple a total of $106 million in outstanding real estate taxes.

The NY lob and Clinton has introduced an amendment to the Foreign Operation bill proposing to withhold US aid to countries that are delinquent in paying their obligations to the United States.

The alleged $21-million obligation accrued way back in the '70s when the Philippine Center in Manhattan allowed their government-owned Philippine Airlines and Philippine National Bank to establish offices in the complex, in addition to opening a Filipino restaurant in the basement.

Such commercial operations are taxable in the United States even though the businesses may be located in diplomatic interests.

"It is simply outrageous for property taxes to be blatantly ignored," the Daily News quoted Clinton as saying. "How Nations face severe financial penalties if they do not, and so should diplomats."

The vote has actually enabled the federal courts, with the Philippines claiming diplomatic sovereignty since the RP government also operates a restaurant in its Jinsing site ground in Manila.

Heard through the grapevine

THE INCAGERS OLD (read between) the Pacific and the Skyway over land boundaries of Puerto Azul and Capitalize events has or upset more with the Binder contingent in Toronto, Canada, now being dragged into the fray.

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Cell phone subscribers to hit 32M

By Clarissa S. Batino

88,000 phone subscribers are seen increasing to at least 32 million by the end of the year.

Leading cellular phone operator Smart Communications Inc. sees its network numbering 19 million, while rival Globe Telecom Inc. puts its subscriber base at 13 million.

Smart president Napoleon Nazareno said that customers of Smart and Talk 'N Text—the wireless brand of Filipino Telephone Corp.—would exceed the original target of 18 million on the back of aggressive marketing campaigns.

During the third quarter, Nazareno said Smart and Pilot added 1.4 million subscribers to its 16.1 million-base at end-June.

Talk N Text added 636,000 and ended the nine-month period with 4.3 million.

"Given the trend during the previous quarter, it is possible we may achieve 11.9 million subscribers this year," said Nazareno, who is concurrent president of PLDT and Pilot.

Sustained subscriber growth enabled Smart's mother firm, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., to post another record profit of P20 billion in the first three quarters.

Smart contributed the lion's share of PLDT's net income.

Nazareno said Smart's 26 switches and more than 5,000 base stations allowed it to cover 91 percent of the population. Globe said it would have close to 4,000 wireless sites by year-end that would expand its coverage to about 90 percent.

For Cellular Sat about 1,000 cellular sites and had customers as of end-September.

Total mobile phone subscribers stood at almost 30 million as of end-September, with 20.2 million from Smart and Globe.

Subscribers of Sun Cellular of the Gokongwei group—stood at about 700,000 as of end-June, and may have signed up more customers with its 24/7 plan that gave free subscribers unlimited text and voice calls within the network for as low as P200 a month.

The mobile phone industry estimated that by the end of 2005, half of the population would become mobile phone subscribers.

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From page B1

ration of that price classification scheme invites suspicion that it was tailored to ensure that certain favored brands would be classified as low-or medium-priced, thereby increasing manufacturers' specific taxes. The maintenance of that same classification scheme in the new bill now invites suspicion that those same favored firms had a hand in determining the outcome of the House version. It takes little imagination to see why some congressmen would allow this to happen.

Ease of collection test

The 1997 law was meant to make it easier for the government to collect the proper taxes from the tax products, by shifting from ad valorem (fixed percentage of the value) to specific taxation (fixed amount per physical unit). The result have presented evasion of taxes through misdeclaration of the value of the product—the very method allegedly used by a prominent company to cheat the government of tens of billions of pesos in the past. But by setting the tax levels according to price categories, the law remained an ad valorem tax in essence, but worse because it failed to adjust as price increases due to inflation.

Thus, there is no stopping a manufacturer from pushing high-priced cigarettes to traditional customers and declaring them as low-priced brands. With a corrupt customer willing to look the other way for a price, this misrepresentation can go on undetected. And even if the customer is honest, it would be physically impossible for him/her to check hundreds of thousands of cartons a day.

And the sinning goes on

Finally, Mr Guevara points out that the House bill fails the temperance purpose of taxing tax products. That is, it hardly discourages consumption of what is widely acknowledged to be a socially undesirable product. With a tax of P1.32 per pack (up from P1.12 in 1997), how can teenagers be discouraged from smoking?

Every passage of the House bill really signals that the fiscal crisis is over? I do not see how anyone could feel good about this measure, unless he is speaking for the tobacco and beverage companies who will again get away with legally enrobbed tax evasion, and we're not yet counting the illegal evasion they can continue doing easily besides.

Comments welcome at jbalboa@inquirer.edu

Past-due . . .

From page B1

Issue under applicable laws;

- disclosure of the names of credit cardholders who allegedly refuse to pay debts, except as allowed under existing rules;
- threat to take any action that cannot legally be taken;
- communicating or threat to communicate to any person credit information which is known to be false, including failure to communicate that a debt is being disputed;
- any false representation or deceptive means to collect or attempt to collect any debt or to obtain information concerning a cardholder; and
- making contact at unreasonable/inconvenient times or hours which shall be defined as contact before 6 a.m. or after 10 p.m., unless the account is past due for more than 60 days or the cardholder has given express permission or said times are the only reasonable or convenient opportunities for contact.

The new BSP circular also required the credit card issuer to fully disclose the billing details behind transactions made in foreign currencies and outside the Philippines, such as application of payments, currency conversion, conversion commission and other currency conversion charges.

PROVINCIAL FACILITIES

GMA sets P95-M system upgrade

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

TELEVISION giant GMA Network, which operates Channel 7, is investing roughly P95 million in the upgrade of its provincial broadcast facilities.

These improvements would pave the way for the company's venture into the international scene in 2005.

GMA-7 said it recently completed the relocation of its antenna systems in Cebu, which will rather like much of its signals and improve the quality of its broadcasts.

After Cebu, GMA-7 will go to Davao and Iloilo.

Once it is now transmitter facilities are targeted to be in place by January next year.

The country's second biggest broadcasting company said it needed to strengthen its local facilities first, before it makes good its promise to launch an international channel next year.

"With our expansion projects across key areas in the provinces, we hope to solidify our position as the leading Philippine TV network," GMA Network chair and president Felipe Gozon said.

"By January next year, we shall launch our international channel, initially in the West Coast of the United States and then in all areas where there are large concentrations of Filipinos," he added.

GMA-7 said it led the ratings for the early evening newscast in the past two months, through "24Oras."

Variety program "Bahaoral" and reality game show "Extra Challenge" also rated high in the fiercely competitive primetime slots.

GMA-7 recorded a net profit of P885 million in the first seven months of the year, up 2% percent from P797 million a year ago.

The analyst it highly likely that GMA will hit its targeted profit for the year of P1.1 billion.

The company's revenues grew 17 percent to P4.3 billion from January to July, but operating expenses also increased by 20 percent to about P2 billion from P1.7 billion a year ago.

The company also plans to push through until you will in much-anticipated initial public offering.

The company plans to sell 30 percent of its shares to the public, which will bring in roughly P9 billion in proceeds.

Internet boosts ePLDT profit

By Abigail L. Ho

WHILE its overall business remained rooted on its cell service operations, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.-subsidiary ePLDT got a "turnaround" from from its Internet business.

This helped the subsidiary post a profit of P126 million in the first nine months of the year, a turnaround from a loss of 99 million in the same period last year.

The ISDT unit's Internet business contributed P430 million to the firm's P2.6 billion consolidated revenue in the first three quarters of the year, a 21 percent jump from last year's numbers.

Digital Paradise, the 60-percent ePLDT-owned company behind the successful Internet cafe chain Netopia, has 100 location nationwide, plus three upcoming outlets in Thailand.

The whole chain now gets at least 2 million customers every month, further increasing the contributions of the Internet business to ePLDT's overall earnings.

"The contribution of Digital Paradise actually came as a surprise to us," PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan said.

The Internet cafe chain now has more than 4,000 computer terminals, providing services in diverse internet access, online gaming, PC gaming and even voice over Internet protocol (VoIP).

Seasonal buying . . .

"Local monetary authorities' line that there are no justifiable reasons to shift from their prevailing monetary stance even with higher inflation figures for October will signal well for investors, signaling support for an upward correction leading," said Jesus Godinez of online broker 2TradeAsia.com.

He added that investors caught wind in selected shares that lagged during the market's recovery, specifically those considered by local and foreign investors for year-end portfolio rebalancing.

Local stocks were lethargic last week as mixed third-quarter earnings prompted optimism about the reelection of President George W. Bush and declining oil prices, Victor said.

Among the companies that reported favorable third-quarter results were Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., which said nine-month profit including one-time gains surged to P20 billion from P9.1 billion last year. There are plans to declare 40 percent of this year's income as a cash payout to shareholders. Increasing expenditures on income jumped to P16.26 billion, up 92 percent from P8.24 billion last year.

PLDT's voice, fixed and mobile phone provider Smart Communications reported to consolidated recurring net income of more doubled to P15 billion from P7.8 billion.

Ayala Corp. was also another source of optimism as it reported a 16-percent jump in net profit to P3.6 billion for the nine months ending September, driven by property, banking and mobile phone operations.

Victor added that those with disappointments over earnings of Ayala's subsidiary Globe Telecoms Inc., Sm Prime Corp. and Ayala Land Premiere.

"The market crept higher early in the shortened trading week but it eventually succumbed to gains as investors locked in profits. Those were pockets of strength, that kept the market afloat. Lower oil prices brought some relief to the market and prompted some buying in selected blue-chip issues. However, investors were quick to take profits as the threat of a credit rating downgrade still loomed," he said.

"Bipartisan support for the ousting of the House of Representatives' ouster of the amended rebuilders of the so-called six top-up appear to be emerging in the Senate. Some members of the administration bloc appeared to be inclined to talking behind opposition Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile's proposal for a uniform increase in taxes on cigarettes. Media coverage pending for the tax bill, which is enough to eight new taxes they want Congress to pass this year. The slow passage of new tax measures is raising the risk of higher borrowing costs, which is also being pressured by rising inflation," he said.

"For the rest of the year, the market's ability to extend its bullish uptrend will hinge on oil and the country's credit ratings. The market will also benefit if crude oil prices remain below $50 per barrel and if key tax measures are breezed..." he said.

He added that the stock market will also watch the US Federal Open Market Committee meeting this week as it determines the fate of key US rates, a move which could send ripples to world economies and financial markets and trickle to corporate earnings.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

RP firms fetch $17M in Paris trade expo

By Conrad W. Dominguez

A US$328 local food and beverage firms posted a total of $17 million (about P952 million) in sales exports/foreign international trade shows held in Paris on Dec 17-21, the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions reported.

Divin, an agency under the Department of Trade and Industry, said the Salon International de l'Alimentation (SIAL) was France's premier food fair and the second-largest food exhibition in Europe.

Some 5,000 exhibitors and over 170,000 trade visitors from all over the world attended the year's SIAL.

"Our participation in the trade fair was particularly significant as our small- and mid-size exporters got the chance to explore and capitalize on the international food business," Trade Undersecretary Thomas G. Aquino said. "The food fair was an excellent meeting point for countries engaged in food exporting and take a vision to target new markets like the expanded European Union."

The Philippine stand at SIAL included exhibits of various products from the following companies: Branded Food and Ingredients, Celebes Caramel Corp., Bo's International, Bolitoy Foods, Pasta Brand, EIC Food, Mega Fishing Corp., Dimetic Empanta, Primex Corp., RFM, Sugar Confections, and Supervision Caramel Products.

Divin said the Philippine firms entertained at least 119 trade inquiries, with the top sellers being coconut crop products rich in desiccated coconut and coconut milk.

Philippine mushrooms ships, said to be the world's only organic ships, attracted buyers from Europe, Africa and Latin America.

Other products that received substantial orders were canned pineapple, canned tuna, pitaya, tropical snack, oriental noodles and sauces and seasonings.

Aquino said that, aside from exposure to new markets, SIAL gave the Philippine firms the chance to emphasize their influence in the global food industry, leading the way in convenience and ethnic food, as well as innovative drinks.

Gov't studying which Napocor debts to assume

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE NATIONAL government may have decided to take on P200 billion of the National Power Corp.'s debts, but it is still considering which of the state-owned agency's maturing obligations to assume, according to Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong.

The Department of Finance has prepared an inventory of Napocor's liabilities, totaling over P600 billion, from which it will have to pick the ones the government will have to shoulder.

"We are preparing different scenarios of how to fulfill RA 9136," Amatong told reporters in a briefing. Executive Order No. 378 directs the government to absorb P200 billion of Napocor's liabilities to boost efforts to privatize the debt-saddled power firm.

Amatong also said she had instructed her staff to come up with the amount of Napocor's obligations maturing earlier than others.

The government decision to absorb Napocor's debts drew flak from different sectors due to its own budget problems. But the DOF said government would have to absorb Napocor's debts if it wanted to hasten the power firm's privatization.

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CAP plan to sell portion of MRT bond holdings OKd

By Elizabeth L. Sandoval

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has approved the plan of pay-per-point Colleges Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. (CAP) to sell portion of its MRT bond assets to pay tuition fees this year.

But SEC Chair Iri Boncan said the approval coined through the sale should go only to CAP's trust fund to be drawn only for tuition fee payments.

CAP first vice-president Bobby Cabe said he said CAP might sell a portion of its P5.6 billion worth of MRT bonds to service approximately P400 million in P600 million in tuition payments by the end of the year.

Cabe stressed that the planned MRT bonds sale would not be the only source of funding for tuition fees.

In term future requirements, CAP is considering selling the entire P3.4 billion worth of bonds, which are backed by the cash flow from the Metro Rail Transit project this year.

CAP has so far paid P2.1 billion to tuition fees of educational plan holders this year. It estimated that by the end of the year, tuition fee payments will reach P2.6 billion.

CAP earlier said it had incurred a trust fund deficit due to the escalation of tuition fees, compounded by lower yields on its trust fund assets.

In its financial report last year, CAP said it suffered recurring loss es from operations amounting to P2.6 billion in 2003 and P402.3 million in 2002. Its trust fund assets which are being managed by its various banks, "had not grown sufficiently" to match its stated net liability to plan holders of P35.4 billion. This resulted in a paper trust fund deficit worth P17.2 billion as of end 2003.

To help beef up its trust fund assets, PE Estate Properties Inc. (Prep), a wholly owned subsidiary of PE Estate Land Inc. (PAL) subscribed to P496.2 million shares of CAP.

Prep had subscribed to 120,397 common shares of CAP and 4,149 and four preferred shares at P100 a share.

The subscription will be paid by assigning properties held by Prep in Cavite to CAP.

Are OFWs' dollars doing us much good?

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honorato C. General

A STUDY by a bunch of economists working on a $150,000 grant from Asian Development Bank, concludes that $6 billion sent into the country by our overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) are mainly spent on consumables. As a result, most of the money is non-productive. It contributes little to economic building.

The economists' prescription is to channel through the banks, or invested in stocks and bonds or in small or medium sized enterprises.

How much money are we talking about? A drinking buddy of mine who runs the international desk of one of the biggest local banks tells me that the OFWs will be sending this year through the banks around $9 billion. Remittances via unofficial channels (courier services and returning Filipinos carrying in their wallets the usual pasalubong) will come up to $3.1 billion, bringing the grand total to a staggering $12 billion. That's how much money the country of 84 million hopes unloaded from every returning flight.

The sum is all new money being pumped into the economy. And there is no end to it and will continue to grow every year. Estimate (this really is just a guess) is that the new money is what growth, productivity improvement, and fluctuation with foreign demand.

On any weekend, hundreds of provincianos crowd into the shopping malls in Makati. They first form a long line at the exchange counter to convert their dollars into pesos. Then they buy everything in sight.

I guess that is conspicuous consumption. I call it demand. And supply always rises to meet demand. Producers gear up to supply shirts, dresses, shoes, toys, blenders, plasma and matrix. Investment tend to move to such light consumer industries. They like to see factories churning out cute and unnecessary and expensive.

But the OFW money is not all for shopping. It is also spent on durable products, such as cars, VCRs, TVs, stereos, furniture and home appliances.

Some of the OFWs do go into business. They become property or land speculators. Or they open ant's ant's stores.

Eventually, the OFW buys his dream house. You can drive up to Baguio or down to Silay. You will find brand-new houses of OFWs all along the way. I once here similar houses mushrooming up in every island in the archipelago. The houses built for OFWs far outstrip the government's low cost housing programs.

My favorite story is about Jony, the daughter of my friend Tony, a poor carpenter in my hometown Nagu City. Some few years ago, Jony, a public high school graduate, landed a job as a domestic helper of an American family in Singapore. When the family moved back to the States, Jony was taken along. In the time, she sent enough money to Tony who bought around his and built a modest home. (Photo for economists: call this!)

Finally, the OFWs are leaving life insurance for themselves and their families at an unprecedented pace. The life insurance companies have deployed their hordes of intrepid agents nationwide to track down the families of OFWs.

Vicente Ayala, chief of Insular Life, says that Metro Manila used to account for 60 percent of nationwide sales. Today the province account for 60 percent of sales, mainly because of purchases by OFWs. He says all other companies have the same experience.

The promises are a form of savings. They are withdrawn into the companies' reserves, which are, in turn, invested mostly in prime stocks and bonds.

If the banks want a bigger slice of the OFWs' dollars, they could start by waiving those three-percent or money transfers. It will also be a good idea for the banks to offer other more attractive facilities aside from the usual savings account. And then, they should tell those families aggressively in life insurance companies sell their policies.

As to the economists, they should learn to grapple with the prominent phenomenon of the OFWs. Textbooks on economics will have to be rewritten.

GOVERNMEN
Cigarette smoking is da

Nokia upbeat on RP cellular phone market

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Featuring Quick Businesses with Sure PROFITS!

By Clarissa S. Bedoya

BANGKOK, Thailand—Nokia, the world's leading mobile phone manufacturer, is confident that sales growth in the Philippines will stay robust, even as the current wireless subscriber base of nearly reached 46 percent of the population.

Thailand Bhanks consult to manufacturer of Nokia Phils. Inc. said the company sees some tempering in efforts on growing and defending its high market share over between kit's 'owning' capital by tapping subscribers who continuously upgrade their phones and pass on their old handsets to family members.

Nokia is also hoping that the country's growing mass market will drive its growth, anyhow believes Nokia holds 46 percent of the Philippines cellular phone market.

"In subscriber gross, the replacement market also picks up. Once subscriber level peaks, and we don't know when that will happen, the replacement market should ease accelerate," said Bhanks.

Nokia launched low Wednesday three handsets that it believed would customers connect all types of mobile phone calls (three or cellular). There should be 1.75 billion mobile phone users in the world by the end of the year or 250 million more from last year's 1.5 billion.

In the Philippines, wireless players believe close half of the population would own mobile phones by the end of 2005.

Nokia said its newly launched cellular models 3220, 6020 and 7710—all loaded with cameras and other multimedia programs—by the first quarter of 2005.

Aimed to the young market, Nokia 3220 has a 1.3-megapixel camera, cool games, and MP3 player. It should sell for less than P20,000. Nokia 6020 is a classic that would cost less than P15,000.

Nokia 7710—a wide-screen phone without keypad but recognizes handwriting with the use of a stylus—is targeted to the high-end market and would sell for more than P30,000.

So far coming weeks, Nokia will start selling to the Philippine market a new Communicator as well as the fashionable 7520 and 7260.

"In the Philippines, our objective is to encourage subscribers to upgrade their phones and we have made available a menu of handsets that should cater to all types of users," said Bhanks.

"Underlying Nokia's selling edge designs and functionality is a phone that remains the easiest to use, especially for people who love to text like Filipinos do," he added.

The Nokia executive believes that even with what appears to be an overwhelming number of Filipino subscribers, the market continues to offer huge potential.

After all, not all reported subscribers are necessarily handset owners. Some wireless customers maintain more than one SIM (subscriber identification module) card.

Smart Communications Inc. and subsidiary Philippine Telephone Corp. subscribers reached 17.3 million as of end-September while Globe Telecom Inc.'s customers stood at 11.7 million during the same period.

More than that, Bhanks pointed out that mobile-operators believed that the mass market would continue to usher in customer growth.

"The operators think there's enough room to grow, especially coming from the D and E market," said the Nokia country manager.

The lower segment of the market, however, is more price-sensitive and Nokia's stronghold in the Philippines could be challenged by cheaper handsets offered by competitors.

Bhanks said Nokia was not taking competition for granted and would continuously come up with products that the market required. Nokia had launched more than 11 units this year.

The government believed that five million handsets are exported to the Philippines each year.

IT WARNING:
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Gov't tightens rules on ODA loan applications

By Michelle V. Ramos

STRICTER rules have been imposed on line agencies applying for official development assistance (ODA), as firm personnel kick of discipline in borrowing has compounded the government's financial woes.

An official of the Department of Finance said government agencies were now required to obtain prior authorization—called Inward obligational authority (IOA)—from the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) before the national government could get loans in their behalf.

The IOA will ensure that the budget of a borrowing agency for a given period can cover its ODA servicing and counterpart funding requirements.

The finance official said a number of government agencies tend to over-borrow. "We are trying to control that by requiring them to first secure authorization from the DBM."

Projects to be funded by ODAs go through the National Economic and Development Authority's Investment Coordination Committee (ICC) for evaluation.

In the past, ICC was not so strict in requiring the DBM authorization. It merely approves loan applications first prior to the submission of the DBM authorization.

He said there were instances when loans had already been approved by the creditor and the ICC, but the government agency's budget would turn out to be insufficient to meet the counterpart funding requirement.

The finance official also said the national government had adopted a policy of not approving loan requests unless projects or programs pass the cost-benefit analysis.

The tightening of rules is in line with the government's efforts not to aggravate its financial woes. It is also aimed at reducing cases of delays in the implementation of ODA-assisted projects, which has been the complaint of multilateral and bilateral creditors, including the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

The JBIC, which is planning to finance infrastructure the Philippines for the past three decades, earlier voiced concerns over the "inefficiencies" of the government in implementing projects that it funded. It said many of the projects that it had approved together with the Philippines government had been delayed because of lack of counterpart funding or loose coordination by agencies concerned.

BUSINESS

54M euros earmarked for RP development

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE GERMAN and French governments will provide a total of 54.3 million euros in official development assistance to the Philippines.

German and French government representatives last week concluded discussions with Philippine officials regarding their ODA line-up for the Philippines for 2005. The funds will be channeled to development projects under the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP).

The projects will cover the power, the micro, small and medium enterprises, and the water sectors.

After identifying the sectors that will benefit from the ODAs, the Philippine and European officials will then discuss the details of each project. The French and German governments come up with their ODA line-up every year.

A source from the Department of Finance said the KFW, the foreign assistance arm of the German government, agreed to provide 17 million euros to fund projects related to the improvement of water distribution in the rural areas, and those related to social development.

The KFW also intends to support the SME (small and medium enterprises) sectors of the Philippines. The German government agreed to provide 30 million for EB Corp., the Philippine government's lending arm, and thus offer credit access to small-time entrepreneurs. It also agreed to provide another 5 million euros to the Development Bank of the Philippines for re-lending.

In its Financial Parity Protocol, the French government has allotted 22.5 million euros for the electrification of rural areas.

The water and rural electrification projects will be undertaken by the Department of Energy, while water projects will be carried out by the Departments of the Interior and Local Governments.

According to the DOF, the government plans to save on cost by sourcing more of ODAs rather than commercial sources to fund its development projects.

ODAs, as opposed to commercial loans, are concessional and therefore impose lower interests and longer maturity.

Mindanao port draws in $20M in investments

By Rosemil W. Dominguez

A CHEMICAL products maker has set aside $21 million to $25 million (about P900 million to P1.31 billion) in additional investments in Southern Mindanao as a result of the ongoing development of a container port on the island.

According to industry sources, prospective investors were attracted to the area due to the construction of the Mindanao Container Terminal at the Phividec industrial estate in Misamis Oriental.

Oleochem Inc., which is engaged in the manufacture of glycerine, amines, fatty alcohol and other oleo-chemical products, has expressed interest in expanding its business on the island.

Another firm has also embarked on a plan to put up a project worth P800 million, according to trade sources.

The P3.4-billion initial phase of the container port was launched last May under the Philippine Ports Master Plan, the port would serve as "a domestic maritime trunk line or national gateway."

The MCT is seen to minimize cost of cargo movement and handling in Mindanao and is expected to grow into a transshipment hub for the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asia Growth Area.

The entire project involves an area of 30 hectares for the initial phase, and 60 hectares for the second. It also includes a 420-meter wharf that would initially handle 270,000 container units a year.

Last July, the Asian Development Bank announced it had earmarked $1 million to technical assistance to develop intermodal transport systems in Palawan and Mindanao.

The ADB said that improving the intermodal—air, sea and land—transport system was consistent with the development strategies for the transportation sector under the current Medium Term Philippine Development Plan, especially since the government had made the development of ports a priority.

Also, the grant's focus on Palawan and Mindanao supports the ADB's commitment to the regional development of the SIMP-Zone.

SIMP-Zone is modeled after other Asian growth polygons like the Greater Mekong Delta River sub-region, Southern China Growth Triangle, Singapore-Johore-Riau Growth Triangle, and the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle.

In the economic set-up, one country is called on to channel investments into another to avail of cheaper resources like land and labor.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2004 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LIFESTYLE

Lito Cinco Bondoc Former Saturday Editor Lisa B. Zulueta

MAH Miguel, Roman Jorge Collection

Tower of Ivory

ALL4ART

WHEN I mentioned to a friend of mine about going to see "Power, Faith, Image," the Ayala Museum exhibit on ivory from the Spanish colonial period, he mumbled something about praying the Rosary.

What I kindly managed to clarify when he was going on and on, I learned many Filipinos probably first heard about ivory when praying the Rosary. More specifically, in a during the recitation of the Litany when the sacred statues of Mary are invoked, their little children first come across the title, "Tower of Ivory." It even sounds lovely in Tagalog, "Torreng Garing."

The second rule tells a little about how ivory is held in such high esteem. Of course, children also know it as the stuff that comes from elephants or more

MMO Ecce Homo detail. Late 19th century ivory image in silver bust. Bangko-Sentral ng Pilipinas Collection

exquisitely from elephants which have been killed for their tusks.

I fully expected then that the exhibits at Ayala would give me some insights into the role of the Ivory Carvers Guild in Philippine life. I was especially fascinated that I had the great honor to be treated into two separate days by no less than the show's most incredible curators, Ramon Villegas and Regalado Trota Jose. More so was country's foremost scholar on jewelry, while Ricky Jose is the foremost expert on churches and church art.

The first piece was a spectacular image of San Miguel, the archangel. It was exquisitely carved, a testament of the meticulous care that were about to be invested in me.

Ricky indicated there was one church in Bohol that had a similar image which, until very recently, was still being carried out in arts for festival processions.

Given that another ivory statue had already fallen into the wrong hands, the practice was sensibly discontinued.

The rest of the tour would be all the more interesting for [illegible] anecdotes like this. I really felt privileged to be in the presence of such knowledgeable scholars. I quickly [illegible] this project to [illegible] would be able to [illegible]

Ricky pointed out the [illegible] how on the frieze above one

TOMORROW

Onglepho's constant colors hover between realism and abstraction

JAMES Onglepho

"LOTUS"

IN 1958, Jaime Onglepho left the University of Santo Tomas School of Fine Arts, and, with paint box in hand, traveled two days on board a ship to Zamboanga. There he lived the life of a full-time painter. Every day he went to the mountains and the fields, and painted landscapes on the spot.

On returning the following year, Onglepho went back to Manila after finishing 20 oil paintings. He realized his dream on March 27, 1959, when Galeria del Ateneo was the Manila Hotel, opened and his first one-man exhibit.

Even Onglepho was surprised to see so many friends and art lovers eager to see his paintings. It was really a big encouragement for him.

His works were featured in the Manila Chronicle's The Week Magazine and in Chinese-language publications. He also was honored when Victorio Edades, his esteemed professor in UST, came on the opening night.

Onglepho recalled that the most important art courses he took in the UST School of Fine Arts were those under Edades like drawing, life sketching and life painting. They were advanced subjects for a beginner like him at the time, but Edades' mastery provided Onglepho with the training, experience, discipline and the basics in life painting that he found very helpful early on.

Still, Onglepho's deep interest was in landscape painting. Inadvertent in his classes in UST, he attended professor Gabriel Custodio's workshop three times a week. He and his friends learned about painting still life, as well as on-the-spot landscape painting every Sunday.

Onglepho found out that "practice makes perfect." He drew counterarguments, and faced the challenges of "making movement through hard struggle, developing the strong points and correcting the weak points." Such discipline and work ethic helped him develop his own style after 20 years.

Expression, not representation

For Onglepho, the high standards of painting lie in the expression of the artist, not in the mere representations or figurative interpretations of an object. He uses subjective tones and emotions to express objective subject matter and scenery in his own unique way. The result is altogether a figurative form with the effect of abstraction, and an abstract image with a figurative form. Onglepho describes this as an abstract style: "It should not be dissonant, but it should not have total similarity, either. They may resemble flowers, but they are not just realist flowers."

He adds, "Semi-abstraction is the most demanding and, by far, the most difficult to achieve.

"It is a matter of carrying the design further in terms of patterns, and especially color, though not as far as to make the original subject unrecognizable. It is halfway between descriptive realism and full abstraction."

"A painting may have four or no lines, but color is a constant," Onglepho notes there are two types of colors: natural colors, which are actual colors; and emotional colors, which are based on the artist's emotions.

Onglepho's colors are rooted in flowers and emotions, which, in turn, breathe life into his paintings.

It is an approach that has kept Onglepho busy with art making in the last 50 years, and 2004 has brought him another rich harvest of creative inputs. Since January, he has done many large paintings in which he was able to further improve and apply the discipline he has always worked hard to attain. "There is no end in learning," he says.

The latest works can be seen in Onglepho's 56th one-man exhibit at Asia Art Gallery, the Plaza, 4/L Shangri-la Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City. The exhibit will open at 6 p.m. on Nov. 11 and run until Nov. 30. Call 6323-021.

"SHARING"

KINGDOM OF A HIGHER WORLD

A Few Good Men

Feng Conversions, Pre-Mid Post Wedding Inspection Trips, Posh mansions and swanky condominiums in ritzy addresses. Luxury cars. Hefty local and overseas bank accounts.

Just one of these few things media has bombarded us for the past weeks regarding the scandals encasing the high-ranking officials of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Seeing our leaders investigating for legislative purposes makes one feel like taking the same nagging questions regarding pork barrel. As if things aren't worse enough, add to that the recent report that the Philippines has maintained its 11th place in corruption in the world.

This oft-the-charts type of corruption can make the average Juan de la Cruz lose hope in finding change in this country and entice him to skip out for good. Or perhaps join some criminal-per-rule quick schemes and just come with the tide.

A wise man once said, "Don't read the headlines; what really matters is the here' here."

A bit of good news is like a wall of fresh air amidst this acrid atmosphere. Regrettably, good stories rarely make it to the papers.

➥ A group of Philippine National Police officers has banded with only one goal: "to be models of integrity." It's not an organized association. Not one of those so-called insurgency, coup d'etat brotherhoods. This special group of officers believe that before we can change others we must exhibit change ourselves. Hope for our country does not lie alone in the hands of our leaders but in the hands of each Filipino — we Filipinos who is courageous to stand up against this pervading culture of greed and corruption and say this is wrong and this must stop right now.

➥ Lt. Col. Cesar Binag implemented a "No Take Policy" as he oversees a police station in Quezon City. People screamed for resignations will do all they can to conserve out of this fix. They will exhaust their financial resources and labor to lighten their charges or if possible, drop the charges. Any officer existing with a meager salary under tempting circumstances will easily give in. But Binag has stood pat on this policy and has solved a string of cases putting many criminals behind bars.

Moreover, a whooping amount of money can be easily milked from unlawful activities, illegal vendors and the like, but Binag steadfastly fought against it. His station has been cited for several accomplishments. One of which is first in Community Service. Binag's unwavered stalwart has evidently touched a chord in the people's hearts. When he was appointed to another position, the community wrote a letter requesting his superiors to bring him back. Binag is now with the office releasing clearances for all income retirees. He continues his lonely quest for virtue — "No Take Policy" in a position prone to graft and corruption. In this country, where bribery is as real as the treacherous traffic, it is hard to comprehend how this officer can have the moral strength to stand on his convictions.

The greatest man is he who chooses right with invincible resolution, who resists the surest temptation from within and without, whose reliance on truth, on virtue, on God, is most unfaltering.

➥ When Lt. Col. Benj Dimaru first handled Cubao Police Station, there was an average of 25-30 snatching incidences per day. Cleaning up a place swarmed with crime is a daunting task, to say the least. Yet during his term, crime has gone down drastically in the area.

➥ Together with Major Warren Tobia, also a movement officer in Special Action Force operations, his outfit has been successful in apprehending and taking down some notorious criminals in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

Recently, his station was awarded as the Best Police Station of the Year in Central Police District Quezon City. Right now, Gen.-endorsed values teachings are being conducted inside the police station. Dimaru and Tobia genuinely desire to see change in every policeman's and every prisoner's life. They believe that somehow darkness in society can be dispelled by the light of changing one life at a time.

We can surely forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light.
— Plato

➥ In this country where violence seems customary, one can only imagine the number of people applying for the Fryman vs Camry Privatized Outside Residence. Lt. Col. Armand Carlos is part of the department that approves this permit. Yet this officer has also adopted a "No Take Policy" and screens the applicants diligently. Not exactly an effortless job especially when there are thousands applying and many willing to pay off sizable fees to acquire this permit. But Carlos has a heart that values integrity more than obtaining the frills of a comfortable exhibit.

The greatest proof of Christianity for others is not how his creeds can logically analyze the reasons for believing, but how far its practices do will make his life see his belief.
— T.B. Hayes

➥ Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA) is a high-status NOR (Intercommand? Gmeni Gerry Doria was confronted with this choice. He chose PNPA, an assignment not so glitzy as other options. He wants to be involved in the education and training of our upcoming policemen. He believes that if the right foundation is laid in the lives of these soon-to-be police officers, they will have an incomparable effect on the country as a whole. Doria, a God-fearing man who believes in the power of prayer, inculcates God-centered values (teachings) in the training and education of these prospective officers in the academy.

"Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of good example." — Mark Twain

Lt. Col. Binag, Lt. Col. Dimaru and Major Tobia, Lt. Col. Carlos, and Director Doria, just a few of the nameless officers whose value goes beyond these stories. Officials brave enough to stand true to their convictions. Who love God and country above themselves. Who do not stop at carving the darkness, but go one step further by lighting a candle and "entering the drill."

The book "Summoned to Lead" by Leonard Sweet, examines how history scholar George Adam Smith makes this compelling analogy between camels' environment of the desert:

Where the desert reaches a river-valley or oasis, the camel is in a continual state of theft from the soul, which is the real cause of the barrenness of such portions of the desert as lies alongside the fertile land. But set down a rock on the sand, and see the difference its presence makes. After a few showers, some blades will spring up on the once barren side: if you have patience, you will see in time.... a garden.

How has the Sweden produced this? Simply by investing the drill.

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Cesare Syjuco returns to art scene

ART iconoclast Cesare A.K. Syjuco—conspicuously absent from the Manila art scene for the past 12 years—returns with a major exhibition, "New Literary (s)ybrids," at the main gallery of the Cultural Center of the Philippines on Nov. 13.

Titled "Flashes of Genius," the big personal show is CCP's penultimate act offering for its 35th anniversary celebration of Asya 2004. It comes in the wake of the melting back-to-back exhibitions by the late Santiago from 2003 to sibling Cecilia Mesa.

A multi-awarded painter, poet and art critic, Cesare's temperamental nature—and his sudden and mysterious disappearance in 1992—manifested him, in the words of one writer, "from the country's most visible art renegade ... into something larger than life ... a cult figure of legend among his peers."

The new show will probably be the first real opportunity for a younger generation of artists, writers and art aficionados to see a comprehensive exhibition of his 'more new works.

"I think that the poet in me is winning the 21-year battle by repository against the painter in me," says the scholastic Cesare, a XYZH awardee for the arts. "But it's a different kind of "poet" that's come out of it ... one who writes specifically for walls and spaces ... not just for the printed pages of a book."

Curated by Jose Marie Syjuco and Ali Gomez Hildawa, the show underscores Cesare's mastery of the visual/literary hybrid he once called "transmedia."

Crossing the boundaries between art and literature, the 90-odd pieces are startling: they are electrified and/or garishly lighted. The gallery itself will palaces with hardcore electronic music.

The show opens this 11 at 6:30 p.m. Guests of honor will include CCP president Nes Jardin, performing arts critic Rosalinda L. Orosa, poet Alfred A. Yuson, and film director Peque Gallaga.

CESARE A.K. Syjuco

Award to honor elementary art mentors

FABER-CASTELL Philippines, distributor of top art materials, is now accepting entries to the first Sining Award in Art Education, which recognizes outstanding art teachers in the elementary level.

Qualified for nomination are elementary visual arts teachers, in public and private schools, in the National Capital Region, Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog. The teachers should be handling Major/Minor Arts/EPP and Makabayan subjects during schoolyear 2004-2005.

The top awardee will receive P20,000, art materials worth P5,000 and a plaque; also P18,000 from Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr.

Three finalists will receive P7,000, art materials worth P3,000 and plaques; also from Belmonte, P5,000.

The schools where the top awardee and the finalists work will also receive the Mayor Belmonte Jr. Award of Excellence.

Criteria include effectiveness in teaching, CM presentation, contribution to the development and promotion of art education in the community (25 percent), and personal philosophy of art education (10 percent).

Other criteria are training background, membership in professional organization and academic advancement.

For nomination forms, visit Faber-Castell Sining Award showroom at 127 E. Rivera Ave., cor. Tomas Morato, Quezon City, tel. 374-0755 to 56; Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines National Office at 7 Road 30, Bagong Pag-Asa, Quezon City (925-5237); or DepEd Division Office Regional Office n/a Art Supervisors.

Visit www.lightlitpplines.com.

Deadline for nomination is Jan. 15, 2005. Call 3746755 to 56. Or e-mail jplaza@pinoy.com or sining-award@lightlitpplines.com.

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Tower of Ivory

Pantagan C1

heads. Apparently he had carefully selected the Biblical passages corresponding to each section of the exhibit (the first ones in Latin, the second Spanish, and the third in Tagalog. Such attention to detail—I was so impressed.

World commodity

On display in the first section of the show were objects that represented world trade. After all, ivory was one commodity that was highly valued by merchants all over the globe. Its very presence implied commerce between regions of the planet.

On one side were items from the Asian country: white porcelain, jewelry made of bone or shell, and many more. This drove at the idea that white and perhaps even gold (as opposed to red, green or blue) were valued as expressive of refinement or traits of the ancient.

On the other side were things from the European half of the planet. I was struck by the fact that whenever in this part of the exhibit came in the form of the pages of a book.

I guess the point being made here was that while the early inhabitants of our archipelago had their own notions of whiteness, the Spanish colonizers would bring in their own with the introduction of ivory and even the paper in printed books.

The next part of the exhibit dealt with the uses of ivory in the creation of the colonial system. Leading the way in this enterprise was, of course, the Church.

This area was divided into two main parts. On one side were works depicting Mary and the Christ Child—what the scholars refer to as the lighter side of religion. This section contained my favorite pieces.

Fr. Arnaiz pointed out that many of the statues of the Virgin showed a lot of cloth draped on her body or falling to pilot at her feet. Apparently, in the past, this season of Lent was a sign of great wealth. I suppose even today if you mount a lady in the supermarket whose dress requires a 20-foot cape, you can bet she's rich, if not always ostentatious.

Still on the subject of cloth, Ricky, in turn, explained that in many Philippine statues of the Virgin, a panel of cloth was gathered and tucked into the belt. Apparently this feature called the "tabod" (sweet). It seems to be unique to images from this country. Somehow it felt good to know that in this gallery of statues, a little telltale detail can help you identify a kababayan! (Now you know what I am going to do with my spare time!)

In this section were several examples of the sleeping Infant Jesus. Perhaps the most spectacular example was the one belonging to the Tungko Jesus Nazareno Parish in Pilipinas.

This amazing piece included a silver bed of animal-boggling craft. Integrated into the silverwork were the flashing turquoise feathers of kingfishers. Talk about feathering one's bed!

There was as well a beautiful statue of Infant Jesus used as an sign of the Virgin that had originally come from Bethlehem in Bethlehem.

Again we turn to the devoted research of Ricky Jose for information that this piece is probably the same one mentioned in an 18th-century account (preserved in the old books of the parish) of a statue being donated to the church by a prominent matron. Can you imagine that Ricky managed to reconstruct this fact by plowing through those dusty records?

Interesting crucifix

The other wing of this part of the exhibit was dedicated to crucifixes, which Ricky and Ramon refer to as the heart-of, saddest item of religion. Among the pieces here was a cross from the collection of the University of Santo Tomas. This crucifix was interesting because of its cryptic marks.

There was also a set of little watercolors by Rizal depicting different scenes in the Passion of Christ.

And so on to the last section of the show and one last prayer to Fray Miguel. I was ready to personally shout out of his book as long as my mind didn't bleed out in the face of all these fascinating items on our heritage.

The last section was dedicated to works illuminating how the use of ivory had penetrated the home. There was a Chinese Flower permit of a woman posing in front of an ivory screen inside a room.

Here, too, were little paintings on discs of ivory. There were rosary and rosaries with ivory beads. There were boxes—don't laugh—billiard balls of that luscious white stuff. Apparently the Philippines used to export these balls.

The swords were from our Muslim communities, indicating that the high regard for the material extended beyond Christian Filipinos.

EL Santo de San Jose (Image of St. Joseph), Paulino and Nony Que Collection

EL Santo de San Jose (Image of St. Joseph), Paulino and Nony Que Collection

VIRGIN from Bontoc, Paulino and Nony Que Collection

CRUCIFIED Christ detail, early 17th century, University of Santo Tomas Collection

NIÑO Dormido, full image

There were also holy tableaux from the 19th century which were displayed in the homes of the rich. They featured scenes from the Bible or the lives of saints.

The central figures were of ivory but the rest of the tableau was made of fanciful elements crafted from glass and more amazingly, the center of feather!

In this section, too, were two long display cases filled with the ivory beads of saints. It was truly an awe-inspiring sight!

The final segment of the exhibit contained cervixes bearing ivory saints. Since these were part of processions which moved through our towns, it was a fitting ending, for we were reminded that ivory wound its way through our lives, uniting the world, the Church, the commerce, and our hearts.

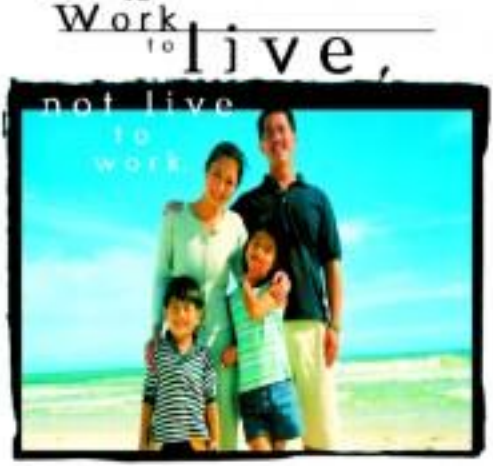
Leaving out of the exhibit, my mind was filled with all kinds of thoughts. Of course, the sad note underlying all this beauty is that so many elephants had to meet cruel deaths to bring us these precious objects. One can only pray that ivory is never again traded in the markets of the world.

But on the same time, our lives is a magic world. Here preserved for us once, so wonderfully put together by our great scholars, Ramon and Ricky, are irrefutable examples of the matchless skills of Filipinos.

How magically our people were able to assimilate silver, feathers, glass, beads wings, and, of course, the whiteness of pure ivory to create these masterpieces of power and faith.

Thanks to Ramon and Ricky, as well as to all the generous collectors who so unselfishly share with us precious pieces from their collections for this amazing show. Don't miss it!

E-mail: heartrick@lycos.com, ivory.org.ph or address letter to Filipinas Heritage Library, Makati Ave., Ayala Triangle, Makati City.



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Pinoy masterpieces come home from Singapore

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

A NUMBER of Filipino masterpieces are finally coming home for a visit.

Starting tomorrow until June 11, 2005, 53 selected works by 37 artists, including Fernando Amorsolo, H.R. Ocampo, Carlos "Botong" Francisco and Anita Magsaysay-Ho, will be shown to the public at the Ayala Museum, many for the first time.

The works represent three periods in the country's progress as a nation: before and after World War II (1930s-1960s); Martial Law (1972-1986); and post-Edsa 1 (1986-2000).

The visit of these priceless works of art was made possible through the first collaboration between the Ayala Foundation, which oversees the operation of the Ayala Museum, and Singapore's National Heritage Board. The show is titled "Greetings: Philippine Works from the Singapore Art Museum," even as some will join hands in the field of the arts.

The Ayala group, however, has long-standing business relations ships with Singapore, through Globe Telecom's partnership with Singapore Telecom and Bank of the Philippine Islands' venture with the Development Bank of Singapore's.

Zobel says the Singapore heritage board, which manages five museums, was an ideal partner considering it has one of the biggest collections of Philippine art overseas.

It has close to 300 artworks by Filipino artists as part of its 5,000-strong permanent collection.

"[Greetings] is just the beginning of a five-year cooperation between the Singapore Art Museum, one of the five national museums under the heritage board's wing, and the Ayala Museum.

Exchange

The Ayala Museum, on the other hand, will exchange Jesse Zobel's "Rainbow" Series II with another artwork from Singapore to mark the beginning of the five-year cooperation.

The memorandum of understanding that will spell out the details of the five-year cooperation agreement will be formally signed today, which will also mark the official launch of the exhibit as a gala for partners and donors hosted by Ayala Corp. and Ayala Foundation chair Jaime Zobel de Ayala.

Zobel says the cooperation agreement entails bringing in just the first of many such endeavors the museum plans to do as part of its vision to be the primary showcase center for Philippine art.

"We museums in those primarily as showcase Philippine art. That is the reason for us being and we are excited about what we have built here," he says.

Zobel says the Ayala Museum is now in a position to aggressively pursue cooperation agreements with other museums worldwide, since its facilities are now of international-quality and can host large or international exhibits.

The makes other museums comfortable enough about lending masterpieces to the Ayala Museum.

The newly refurbished Ayala Museum covers four floors of climate-controlled gallery space and is helping put the Philippines on the global art map.

Its inaugural exhibits include artworks and ethnographic collections loaned by the New York Public Library, the Newberry Library in Chicago, National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden, The Netherlands, and now, the Singapore Art Museum.

Supported by the Embassy of the Republic of Singapore, "Greetings" is the part of "Time In Transition," the annual exhibition showcases of the Ateneo Art Gallery, Ayala Museum, the Lopez Memorial Museum and the Museo Pambata ng Maynila.

Zobel says that by putting the Ayala Museum at Greenbelt 4, right in the middle of the office and shopping district, the Ayala group is confident more Filipinos will get to appreciate the wealth of talent Filipinos have to offer[sic] of art.

"I think that art is a great source of pride for Filipinos. It is a way of unifying, of pulling boats-it all the things that make our country great," Zobel says.

"TWO Figures," by Ang Kiu Kok

NELIA, portrait by Fabian de la Rosa

"GINGER Tea," by Anita Magsaysay-Ho

"It 'tel'Dorem si Mow'Kork's 21 Remembered," by J. Elizalde Navarro

FERNANDO Zobel de Ayala

"THE HEAD of an Ox," by Vicente Manansala

Singapore envoy to discuss East Asia's economic miracle

THE TALKS during the robust economic growth of Singapore, China, Japan and other parts of East Asia will be discussed in a luncheon forum with Singapore's Ambassador-at-Large Tommy Koh on Mrs. Cut Maker Dangal La Hotel. The forum is organized by Asia Society Philippine Foundation Inc.

Koh believes that East Asia's economic miracle will continue for the next 20 years, and by 2025, the region's combined gross domestic product will exceed those of Europe and America.

The Asia Society is the US' leading institution dedicated to fostering a deeper understanding of Asia and communication between American and the peoples of Asia and the Pacific. It provides a forum for building awareness in the US for the more than 30 countries broadly defined as the Asia Pacific region...the area from Japan to Iran, and from Central Asia to New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific islands.

Koh, who is also chair of the papers's National Heritage Board, is one of the leading proponents of Asian values.

Among the Top 10 positive Asian values he has cited are: placing the interest of others above all else; strong family ties; hard work; education; saving and frugality. These values, combined with the right economic policies, are responsible for the region's economic boom, he opines.

In presenting Asian values, Koh clarifies he is not saying they are superior to Western values. "There are good Asian values and good Western values just as there are bad Asian values and bad Western values."

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Self-portrait of an artist as a young woman

By Cassandra C. Tijam

THERE'S a kind of narcissism involved in artists doing self-portraits.

It might have been understandable, even necessary, in the days before the invention of the camera. But nowadays, that self-absorption can be considered-able. It even seems unnatural, as it could be betraying a deeper need.

Not only the artist's psychology and creative process, but the artist's physicality and presence head as well, emerge in the studying rhythm and sculptural motif in "Blessed Times, Stained Days," Mia Herbosa's latest exhibit in The (Drawing Room) at Metrostar Building, 1307 Metropolitan Ave., Makati City.

Here are 22 pieces in oil on linen, canvas and masonite; six sculptures in plaster and hydrocal; 22 prints, in salt or hand-ground, white ground, drypoint, chine colle, flowered Japanese paper, tree pieces, stencil, etching, monotypes and a watercolor.

The 36x36 prints are done in graphic process. The sculptures are burnt and a bit rickety, in metallic black or chalky white. The paintings are rendered in rich tones and solid colors, often strong on chiaroscuro.

Four prints are overtly self-portraits. ("Through the Looking Glass," "Self-Reflection," "Self-Portrait" and "Artist's World").

Of the sculptures, one is also overtly self-reflective ("I Am Woman"), while two allude to the artist ("Mommy Mia," which is somewhat of the artist as a baby; and maybe "Bandaness," though the subject has too squidlike a face to nearly resemble the artist's soft features).

Of the pieces in oil, there's "Self-Portrait (Lamplight)," a glowing image done in fluid brushstrokes.

Not included, but typical of Herbosa's art, is "Self-Portrait at Thirty-One," which we saw in the group exhibit "Homage to the Masters" in the Metropolitan Museum of Manila two years ago. It is a reworking of Ulster's "Self-Portrait" (one of many).

Sensitive depiction

Herbosa is an accomplished portraitist, as can be seen in the oil paintings. Many of these pieces, in their sensitive depiction of subtly-looking skin and lumps of sagging flesh, recall the work of Lucian Freud. Among them are five paintings that won the Edward McDowell Grant of the Art Students League of New York.

Herbosa is always first nominated and awardwise member of committee. Without the little portraits of cats and dogs, of Hans Hoffman (the Rotogari, or the etching famed on a Van Gogh still portrait.

In fact, she ravages the genres, also savaging landscapes, still lifes, animals, nudes, even fantasies and bird-a-lone. She proves she can be an artist of deep psychological penetration (the exploitation) Munch-like photograph "Can food?") and with a social consciousness ("Unhappy Birthday").

After graduating from de-

"SELF-PORTRAIT (Lamplight)," by Mia Herbosa

la Manila University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, with classes in Fine Arts and Communication Arts, she took further studies privately and in workshops in New Jersey, Vermont and New York. She trained in painting and printmaking in the Art Students League.

Winning the McDowell, she was sent on a travel grant to 27 cities in Europe, enabling her to visit as many art galleries and museums as she could, where she basked in the glories of European art.

She tells of the experience of staring at Ulster's "Self-Portrait" at Alte Pinakothek in Munich: "I feel grateful and humbled by the sublime talents bestowed on some people that seem to me to be divine in origin... To see art evident, I find this overwhelmingly refreshing, and I am freed of worry about my own meager arsenal of tools and techniques. Every time a while, I feel like a caterpillar wrapping up from the process, shedding by the butterfly's flight."

In Bern's the deeper level, just as we've suspected. Surveying the Master's painting, she replaces for the umpteenth time. Vicariously the caterpillar becomes the butterfly.

Homey images

On the other hand, Pam Yan has found a way of integrating autobiographical narrative into the artwork, weaving her life story into a tapestry of found images.

Consider "Quilted Objects," her latest exhibit of six pieces in acrylic on canvas in West Gallery at the Artline, A.S., Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati City.

Here the artist uses images of the mundane as "patterns in the grid-like compartmentalized structure of a traditional quilt." Squares or rectangles of varying colors (pieces containing disparate images are placed edge to edge as in a quilted bedcover.

"I just started looking for patterns, in fabrics, doilies," says the artist, "but it's difficult to separate making from personal life. Most of these images are from my domain. They belong to particular periods in my life and art-making. These objects in the piece. Upstage, for example, came from the time our house was under renovation. Everything that happens to our outwork with our windows, as do the images in my paintings—it's like recycling."

In "Operation," a rectangle of white facework is surrounded by gray and brown rectangles of facework, lamp switches, cutout handle, nail hole, watermark of drinking glass, hollow block, paper windowpanes.

The images are realistic, bordering on photorealism, but either some impressionistic or Pop art the resultmess mirrors. Juxtaposed, they give the composition is enriched.

In "Apparition," the central image of an open funnel in an orange square is surrounded by brown, red, blue and gray squares with images of a blue-green moving wheel, a red lily bowl and other rug-like objects.

In "Tea Break" are repeated images of brown tiles and wall, gray facework on brown, cinnamon basework, maroon-to-rose

"LOOPS," by Pam Yan

"LIBRARY Lion," by Herbosa

"Loops" has orange, gold, brown, blue-green and gray squares containing images of white circles, gray wicker weave, red handled scissors, broken acrylic varnish, a sewscope.

"Wasteland" has slate-green, blue and gray rectangles of lacework, weathered chipboard wall, red and brown wood pipes.

In "Toy Story," two rectangles of chalk-blue rubber tires frame rectangles of gray and pink lacework, blue and pink pencils. Legs just's of red, violet and green, and an orange phone extended with what looks like a landscape of scales, bowels, blue and red.

Intimate record

Appearing like a random collection of table accessories, with the quilt as unifying image, the exhibit is actually an intimate record of the artist's home and family life.

The point that, as Ellet is known to between fabric and fabric, meaning is contained in between the personal and the painted image, resulting in a blanket of images, impressions and stories.

This is no mere decorative art. "Very formulaic ang concern ki," says Yan.

The images are not just randomly juxtaposed, either. She takes pains in mentioning them, how to visually connect the forms, the colors.

In several pieces ("Loops," "Toy Story," "Tea Break," "Appartion"), they form a unity in their geometric shapes, either in their similarity or contrast.

In some, they have been so rigorously juxtaposed and so subtly configured (the artifact) viewer may miss the idea. Look at "Tea Break" and marvel at the contrasts between fragility and hardness, smoothness and roughness, of ceramic tiles, porcelain teacup and concrete wall.

Or "Toy Story" with the different textures and varying softness of rubber tires, plastic toys, pencils and lace.

This is only Yan's second solo exhibit though she's long been in to art-making. A Fine Arts graduate, major in Painting, from University of the Philippines, she won first place in the Printmaking category of the 1992 Metro Association of the Philippines Annual Art Competition.

She says she painstaking process—reminds her personality and temperament. Her fondness for patterns, she adds, originated from the 4-minutes paint-and-glue sessions in detail.

Among her favorite artists are Michelle Blagtas, Klimt, Of her contemporaries, she admires the works of Kerez Flores, Mark Justiniani, Elmer Borlongan.

For five years she has been instructor at the Department of Studio Arts at UP teaching Materials and Painting.

As workshop facilitator in Abra once, she was into "a hands-on exploration of indigenous materials to evolve design taxonomies arising from motifs and patterns common to Ifugao traditional art."

Thus, undoubtedly, must have influenced the art that we are seeing now.

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CID REYES is holding his 10th solo exhibit at the Crucible Gallery, 4L, EM Magsaysay. The show is titled "Ryoanji: The Japanese Dry Garden Series." Ryoanji is the famous rock garden in Kyoto, Japan. Known as dry landscapes, rock gardens are meditation sites, distilling a sense of stillness and calm. They contain a variety of rocks, pebbles, moss and neatly-raked gravel, evoking islands of rocks and streams of water. The works of Reyes are abstractions inspired by those Zen gardens. The show runs until Nov 14.